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FIRST THINGS

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DAVID R. CARLIN

love, hate, and jewish identity
JONATHAN SACKS

the unraveling of scientific materialism
PHILLIP E. JOHNSON

atrocities not fit to print
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recovering christendom
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saying i do
DAVID BLANKENHORN

Also: James Nuechterlein on Pastoral Concerns · Peter J. Leithart · Alan Jacobs · Peter Berkowitz · Stephen M. Barr · Dean C. Curry · George McKenna

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Richard John Neuhaus
The Public Square
A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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Power, Not Principle

In "Debriefing the Philosophers" (June/July), J. Bottum puts special emphasis on the following statement by assisted-suicide advocate Ronald Dworkin: "In the meantime, the public would have had the opportunity to participate more fully in the argument about principle; and, when circumstances make it possible, wide public discussion is a desirable and democratic preliminary to a final Supreme Court adjudication." Mr. Bottum calls this "among the most blatant declarations of judicial rule in America."

Oddly, it both is and isn't. On the one hand, in assuming the Supreme Court is competent to adjudicate into existence a new "right" to be killed, it is certainly sufficiently blatant. But consider that the context of the remark was Dworkin's suggestion that the Supreme Court postpone its decision on assisted suicide, since the Court seems disinclined at this time to approve it. Dworkin is therefore pleading for more time to bring more public opinion to bear on the Court, in the hope that the Justices can be influenced to come around to his way of thinking.

This hope that a "democratic preliminary" will aid the Court in ruling as desired actually undermines the notion that judges should rule. Such argument as exists for judicial autocracy states that the power of judges is legitimate, within their jurisdiction, because they base their rulings on dispassionate evaluations of the facts of a case in the light of special legal knowledge and wisdom. The justification for their independence therefore *demands* that public sentiment not be permitted to sway their logic. Dworkin's plea for more time to rally mobs to chant slogans outside judges' chambers reveals that he does not respect this independence in principle, but only when it suits him. Dworkin's argument demonstrates that our pragmatic intellectual activists are not actually interested in democratic principles, or even judicial authoritarian principles. They are interested in power, however they may find it.

Michael Juergens
Hammond, IN

Jews, Abortion, and Democracy

Elliott Abrams describes a very plausible scenario as to why most American Jews today are so antagonistic to any public display of religious practice ("Judaism or Jewishness," June/July).

But there is one serious issue not addressed by Abrams' otherwise comprehensive analysis: abortion. Why is it that polls have shown not only that 90 percent of American Jews support elective abortion but also that many are leaders of the pro-abortion movement? How can descendants of Holocaust survivors justify this? The Holocaust fatally attacked an entire class of humans identified by race and religion. Abortion attacks an entire class of humans identified by age (too young) and place of residence (still living in the womb).

If efforts to protect the unborn could be neatly filed away as only a religious belief, Mr. Abrams' analyses would apply. Abortion, however, is far from that. It is in fact a human right, and, as such, Jews should be leading the effort to provide legal protection for the unborn.

It goes without saying that equal effort should be exerted to provide help to the mother. However, to give to one person (the mother) the absolute legal right to kill another (her pre-born baby), and to have so many Jewish people support this, is a paradox that this observer (who has been a leader in the right-to-life movement for over twenty-five years) has never understood.

Perhaps Mr. Abrams could explain?

J. C. Willke, M.D.
Life Issues Institute, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH

Elliott Abrams makes a common error when he tells us that early American Jews "eagerly supported the Revolutionary ideal of individual rights and freedom of conscience, which American statesmen learned from the Enlightenment." I am happy to hear that early American Jewry supported

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those principles. But American statesmen had long known about those ideals from sources that predated any thought of an Enlightenment, namely from biblical principles as mediated through the medieval Church and the development, especially in England, of common law.

M. Stanton Evans makes a compelling case for this in *The Theme Is Freedom*, with numerous quotes from the medieval period. He notes: "As might be expected from biblical ideas of kingship, the foremost political concept of the Middle Ages was *constitutionalism*—establishing limits on the power of kings and on the scope of government in general." The Magna Carta was not only a medieval, but a specifically feudal, document, with the Church, notably Archbishop Stephen Lancton, playing a major role in its development. As Lancton insisted: "Whatever service is rendered to the temporal king to the prejudice of the eternal King is undoubtedly an act of treachery." The king was a limited monarch, under a law higher than himself, the same law under which the people live. That principle is the foundation rock of any free society and of any democratic republic. It is also a principle that is logically incapable of being supported outside the biblical framework of a personal Creator. . . .

Sadly, for the most part the Church dropped the ball and bought into the alleged opposition, common in modern thought, between reason and revelation. But the Reformed tradition in alliance with English common law salvaged much of the truth, transported it to America with the Puritans and Pilgrims, and set up the principles by which the American democratic republic was established. A democratic republic cannot be founded apart from biblical principles, and it will not survive the loss of them.

(The Rev.) Earle Fox
Emmaus Ministries
Ambridge, PA

Elliott Abrams replies:

I cannot fully answer Dr. Willke's questions.

As to the general support for "abortion rights" among Jews, this is not so hard to understand. No doubt support for those rights is highest among upper-middle-class people, people with college and graduate school degrees, and people who are liberals and/or Democrats. Jews are disproportionately found in all three groups, so it is predictable that they will be more pro-choice than the average American.

Yet I believe that even within these groups—that is, among well-educated, well-off Democrats—the support for "abortion rights" among Jews and in particular Jewish women is exceptionally high. Why? Not, I think because they routinely have recourse to abortion as a means of birth control, for as a group they use birth control successfully and turn to abortion rarely.

Perhaps it is related instead to the fact that Jews have long viewed family planning as entirely legitimate and believe—under even the strictest interpretations of Jewish law—that abortion is under certain circumstances permitted. Thus laws that prohibit *all* abortions would in fact contravene Jewish teaching.

As for the Jews who are leaders of the abortion-on-demand movement, they are acting not as observant Jews but as observant liberals. Jewish law sees abortion as the ending of a life, and therefore as a tragic event even when it is permitted—and it is not permitted "on demand."

I do not think, by the way, that the discussion is helped much by Holocaust analogies. For what it's worth, American Jews are not, in fact, descendants of Holocaust survivors any more than American Christians are descendants of Holocaust perpetrators.

The Founding Fathers agreed (as do I) with Rev. Fox that our democratic republic could not survive without religious faith. They understood that the institutions they were creating did not create virtue, but rather assumed that belief in God and in divine reward and punishment would sustain it. I would not agree, however, with Rev. Fox's view that biblical principles as mediated through the medieval Church and common law explain the actions and beliefs of the

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RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
Editor-in-Chief

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Founding Fathers without reference to the Enlightenment. The Church and the common law did not provide for the degree of individual liberty and freedom of conscience that the American republic adopted, and the history of the Jews of England is evidence enough of this. Washington's famous letter of 1790 to the Jews of Newport was not a restatement of medieval Church law or English common law principles, but a ringing declaration that in America there would be a greater assurance of individual rights than any offered in Europe.

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What Price "Glory"?

As a devoted reader of First Things, I was intrigued to discover the opinion item by Michael R. Linton on the "Glory of Easter" Passion Play at the Crystal Cathedral ("Smoke and Mirrors at the Crystal Cathedral," June/July). Generally the writer appreciated the magnificence of the production that thousands witness every Lenten season.

He doesn't say so, but I would think he would admit it may well be the finest such performance presented anywhere in the nation and rivals the long-celebrated Oberammergau to which over the years countless folk—this writer included—have made a pilgrimage.

While having many good things to say about the "Glory of Easter," he makes, along with some rather petty criticisms, two major charges: one, that the production does not involve the spectators and, two, that it omits the theme of sin and redemption. . . .

To the charge that the audience is not involved, I respond that it is as fully involved as the audience at, say, Oberammergau. One place where this is clearly true is during the moving singing of the beloved song "Were You There?"

To the charge that sin and human guilt and the need of atonement are absent, I respond that such is not the case. One point where this becomes crystal clear is during the singing of the also beloved hymn "Because He Lives!"

God sent His Son, they called
him Jesus,
He came to love, heal, and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my
pardon,
An empty grave is there to
prove my Savior lives.

That the "Glory of Easter" is not intended to put people on a guilt trip is greatly to be commended. It should be noted that neither did Jesus with those he was trying to reach. With both the woman caught in adultery and the woman at the well he might have done just that, but he did not. It was not his way, even though some theologies fail to take this into account. . . .

(The Rev.) Donald W. Morgan
Pastor Emeritus
First Church of Christ
Wethersfield, CT

Michael Linton replies:

The problem of the distanced "audience" is probably even worse at Oberammergau than at Garden Grove. But I did not (and would not) cite the Bavarian production as a model to be emulated. Instead, I suggested that liturgical presentations of the Passion and Bach's two extant settings showed ways that more deeply involved congregations (and not audiences) in the unfolding gospel story than the Garden Grove "Glory."

By its very definition, I take that gospel story to be penitential (Pastor Morgan's "guilt trip"). It's hard for me to see how the crucifixion of the world's Savior for the redemption of sins could be anything else, but Pr. Morgan seems to think that it can be. But he is quite right to point out that the production includes a performance of the Gaither song "Because He Lives" with the song's line about pardon. Perhaps I should have mentioned that. But eight words in an hour and a half script does not appear to be a weighty statement on the matter, especially when significant biblical texts that deal with sin and culpability are either mutilated beyond recognition or simply eliminated. Instead of making it "crystal clear," I think that the evidence suggests that the Crystal Cathedral clouds the doctrine pretty skillfully. In any case, it shows a disrespect for the Bible surprising—to say the least—within the Reformed tradition.

Good News

Writing about spiritual renewal in Latin America in the June/July issue

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of First Things, Pedro C. Moreno says that he is a Latin American Pentecostal, though nobody would be able to guess the fact from the information he provides in "Rapture and Renewal in Latin America." Which proves that the discipline of textual criticism is a very doubtful science, and that conclusions derived from "internal evidence" may not be very sound.

Be that as it may, the information reported in the article is good news indeed. In reference to Pentecostal congregations it is reported that 66 percent are women, which means that 33 percent are men. That, I think, is positive. Also, it is reported that Christians in the renewal are not concerned with becoming wealthier or with economic development in general, but are concerned instead with spiritual growth and their eternal salvation. . . .

There are those who measure everything, even religion, in economic terms. Let them be aware, then, that the positive economic consequences of piety follow from the rationality of God's creation. What is good for eternal life is also good for earthly life. The Christian virtues are not designed to make us unhappy, but to allow us to have a better life "and have it more abundantly." The Marxists, and other materialists, thought they could attain wealth more efficiently by converting church buildings into factories; but this idea sprang from an unsophisticated view of human nature that ignored reality. Our psychology is much more complicated, and our needs are more nuanced. This is unfortunate for the materialists, because it is a fact that "man does not live by bread alone." . . .

Luis Caso
Worthington, OH

Judge and Jury

It is unfortunate that Michael W. McConnell ("Breaking the Law, Bending the Law," June/July) saw fit to criticize Judge John E. Sprizzo's decision acquitting Bishop Lynch and Brother Fidelis for their abortion clinic pray-in. While Professor McConnell can be read to be "praising with faint damnation," I do wish he had found a way to be fully and explicitly supportive of Judge Sprizzo.

Judge Sprizzo apparently wrestled with a legal and ethical dilemma commonly faced by agents of an authoritarian government who wish to use their positions of power to mitigate that regime's injustice. His third footnote indicates that "positive law" is not alone sufficient for conviction, citing fugitive slave and Nazi legislation as well as international human rights. Why, then, did the good judge not rule directly that the defendants were innocent because laws that deny equal protection to the unborn are invalid as violative of natural human rights—as the defendants had argued in accordance with *Evangelium Vitae*?

Any answer to this question must take into account the fact that a ruling on the law alone would almost surely have been reversed on appeal. Only insofar as Judge Sprizzo acted as "fact-finder"—the traditional jury role—could his acquittal stand. He had to focus on motivational facts and "jury nullification" in order to keep the defendants from being punished under unjust laws decreed as a result of *Roe v. Wade*.

Moreover, "jury nullification" was a particularly appropriate vehicle for the judge to use. Contrary to Professor McConnell's brief summary, jury nullification in its genesis did not involve a lawless refusal to convict "for no reason at all" or "out of sympathy for the defendant." In the 1735 *Zenger* case, cited by Judge Sprizzo, the jury's right to acquit is founded squarely on its duty to judge the law as well as the facts. This law-and-fact competence of the jury has long been part of the constitution of the state where I teach, Indiana, and is surely one of the strongest reasons for our standard practice of letting the jury deliver "general" (i.e., "guilty" or "not guilty") verdicts rather than only "special" (i.e., purely factual) verdicts. The jury's duty to find a valid legal basis for its verdict requires it to ignore laws that are invalid because unjust—as entailed by natural human rights—without the danger of being overturned on appeal. Jury nullification is thus a most convenient doctrine for a conscientious judge acting as jury to use to acquit nonviolent abortion clinic obstructors. I hope that it will be often so used.

Richard Stith
Professor of Law
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, IN

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Lost Identities

It is not a loss of respect for the sanctity of life but rather a loss of respect for individual identity that is at the heart of the Heaven's Gate tragedy ("Rancho Santa Fe and the Culture of Death," Public Square, June/July). While the suicide of a despairing individual is no less tragic than the mass suicide of cult members, it is in no wise comparable.

What sets the two deeds apart is the surreal calmness and unity of purpose the cult members displayed by taking their own lives in a well-planned, multi-stage operation. By their actions, the cultists showed that they had already discarded their individual identities with the casual indifference with which they now sought to dispose of their earthly "containers."

Cult leaders (like Heaven's Gate's Marshall Applewhite) teach their followers to fear their pre-cult personalities; their aim is to replace each individual's identity with a group identity that loosely mimics the personality of the cult leader. It is in this way that cults present their most potent threat to democracy and society; for it is only by affirming the value of the individual within the context of community that a truly democratic society becomes possible.

Rancho Santa Fe must therefore be viewed as part of a continuum of cultic behavior that also includes the mass weddings staged by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. I was once a participant in such a mass wedding—on July 1, 1982, four years before I quit the Unification Church. I had not chosen the woman who marched beside me into Madison Square Garden for my bride; rather, "True Father" selected her for me in late 1980. I believed this sacrifice of my individual preference was an altruistic act. I was, however, never allowed to live with this woman, and our "marriage" ended two years later when she quit the Unification Church. For a while longer, I tried to maintain my connection to that group, but ultimately I abandoned the effort and returned to my family in Canada. Ten years had transpired since I joined, and I had lost much of my sense of self in the interim. The recovery of that loss remains an ongoing challenge.

While my own loss of personal identity is certainly not as tragic as the loss of life at Rancho Santa Fe, it nevertheless forms part of the same phenomenon. The act of discarding one's identity is itself a symbolic death; the Heaven's Gate members merely chose to turn that symbolic death into a literal one.

K. Gordon Neufeld
Vancouver, BC

Beyond Incest

While I am normally impressed with the clear light Richard John Neuhaus is able to cast upon the themes of books and films, I was a little disappointed that he bought into Linda Chavez's depiction of the movie *Lone Star* as a pro-incest film (While We're At It, June/July).

As a committed Christian who has both seen the film and read Ms. Chavez's comments, I confess I found the film to be more thoughtful. While it is true that the film depicts an incestuous relationship, viewers and the characters themselves find out about it only in the final three minutes of the film, so it seems unfair to link it with Kathryn Harrison's book *The Kiss* as attempting to break a major taboo in order to sell the product in question.

Also, while it is true that the characters agree to continue seeing each other romantically, I don't believe the makers of the film intend this to be the blanket endorsement of the behavior that Ms. Chavez seems to. For starters there is a great irony in the revelation of the incestuous relationship. The male participant has been convinced that his father was trying to keep him and his then-girlfriend apart solely on the basis of racial prejudice, so his finding out that there was a "legitimate" reason for opposing the relationship suggests how often we are all mistaken about the past. Also, the female character sums up her philosophy with the line, "Forget the Alamo." While this line indicates a desire to escape from the historical and, yes, moral

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influences of the past, the entire film up to and including that moment has powerfully made the point that such a venture is impossible. The past continually reasserts itself, defining us even as we seek to reject or escape it. The film I saw was not a melodrama like *The Kiss* that said incest was okay; it was a tragedy that said our past, corporately and individually, will always make claims upon us, whether we choose to acknowledge them or not.

Kenneth R. Morefield
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL

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THIS TIME

Pastoral Concerns

James Nuechterlein

In his wise and engaging essay elsewhere in this issue ("I Do?", p. 14), David Blankenhorn expresses puzzled dismay over the alacrity with which the clergy have participated in the contemporary trivializing of the marriage vow. "I do not understand," he says, "why the clergy, the custodians of our marriage tradition, so willingly relinquish their authority and, in effect, collaborate in their own marginalization." I share Mr. Blankenhorn's dismay but not, I think, his puzzlement. The "massive transfer of authority" away from the clergy represented in the transformation of the marriage vow is part of a long, slow decline in the prestige of the pastoral office. That decline, in turn, is both cause and effect of the erosion of clergy self-confidence and self-respect.

In mainstream American Protestantism today (and, I suspect, in much of American Catholicism as well) the magisterial *Herr Pastor* of my Lutheran childhood no longer exists, and not simply because in many churches the person who replaced *Herr Pastor* may well be a woman. The waning of pastoral authority began prior to women's ordination, and it continues for reasons that the undoing of women's ordination would not touch.

Some of the sources of the decline are obvious enough. Before World War II, for example, people in many communities looked up to their pastor if for no other reason than that he was part of the small minority in their midst with professional credentials. In a time when relatively few people held college degrees, he garnered the respect accorded to all professionals. One admired the pastor not only because he was educated in the holy mysteries, but simply because he was educated at all.

That educational gap between laity and clergy has largely disappeared—or, worse, it now exists in reverse. Today's laity typically have learning credentials of their own, while many clergy are, by earlier standards, shockingly miseducated. I recall a young Lutheran pastor apologizing to me for his uncertain grasp of the Lutheran Confessions by explaining that his seminary training had focused "more on counseling and things like that than on theology." And a distinguished theologian who had switched from teaching at one of his church's seminaries to one of its affiliated liberal arts colleges told me that his new students were only half as interested in religion as his old ones but were twice as smart. It has been a long time since adults routinely suggested to bright and ambitious young people that they consider the pastorate.

These unsettling developments are related to the general secularization of the culture. Americans are still, at least in comparative terms, a deeply religious people, but over time their religion has been increasingly confined, in William James' terms, to what they do with their solitude. In the nineteenth century religious language and assumptions permeated American public discourse. Today they do not.

That is particularly the case in intellectual circles, and the clergy, like other educated groups, take their cultural signals from the academic and media elites. Informed by those elites of their marginal status—religion in elite realms is not so much repudiated as it is simply ignored—members of the clergy have flitted from one theologically tangential concern to another in search of cultural relevance.

For much of this century, the most prominent of those concerns was politics. From the Social Gospel onward, liberal theologians interpreted Christian categories of sin, repentance, and grace in collective and social terms rather than in individual and spiritual ones. Their theology found expression in "prophetic" condemnations of capitalist society and in affirmation of one form or another of collectivist solidarity. As Peter Berger nicely put it, Protestant mainliners found themselves "increasingly reluctant to make statements of faith unprotected by redeeming sociopolitical significance."

In its own terms, at least in certain circles, the political option had considerable success. For those willing to agree, in the slogan of the time, that "the world sets the agenda for the church," the sixties were especially heady years. William McLoughlin, coeditor (with Robert Bellah) of a widely noticed symposium on *Religion in America* published in 1968, noted that all the symposium contributors agreed "that religion is still worth talking about because it is playing a significant part in the social reform causes of the times: civil rights, peace, academic freedom, civil liberties, poverty, social justice in general." "Here," he added without hint of irony, "there is real commitment to ultimate concerns."

McLoughlin unknowingly indicated the limits of Social Gospel theology a few sentences later: "While American religious leaders are now, as always, deeply involved in social and reform movements, those same leaders constantly express the fear that they, their churches, and their doctrines are somehow inconsequential or irrelevant to the religious needs of their constituents." Apparently the agenda set for the church by the world suited the church's leaders better than its followers.

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In any case, the collapse of socialism since 1989 has stripped the political option of its allure. One senses an exhaustion of inspiration even in the leadership of the National Council of Churches or the peace-and-justice bureaucracies of mainline Protestantism. There the new enthusiasms are for sundry versions of feminism, multiculturalism, and ecological correctness. But as far as most laity are concerned, these are—at least when pumped up to the level of "ultimate concern"—cult enterprises, and clergy anxious to recover lost prestige will not likely find it by invoking goddesses, shamans, or theologies of recycling.

What one senses as the dominant concern among many pastors today is no particular cause, but simply a poignant, almost desperate desire to be liked. They are eager, above all, to accommodate. If young couples wish, through do-it-yourself vows, to redefine the meaning of Christian marriage, so be it. Uncertain of their message, such pastors seek to maintain through personal popularity the authority that earlier would have been theirs simply by virtue of their office. They seem not to understand that personal charisma cannot over the long run compensate for the loss of the charisms available only to those with a sure grasp of the priestly vocation. It is my impression that the pastors least susceptible to attenuation of self-confidence and self-respect are to be found in evangelical churches and in those circles of the great catholic tradition where the traditional affirmations of the faith remain most vibrantly alive.

It's not, to be sure, quite that simple. The assaults of modernism and postmodernism on Christian sensibilities cannot simply be wished away, and the "second naivete" to which Christians must necessarily aspire will not have the uncomplicated assurance of the first. We are more acutely aware than ever that we live by faith, not by sight. And I wish I could be more optimistic than I am that the new millennium will witness, in Pope John Paul II's phrase, a "springtime of evangelization." The specter of a largely dechristianized Western Europe hovers over the hopes of all of us, laity and clergy alike, that our fate will be otherwise.

But all that, finally, is beside the point. Estimations of success or failure, or of the state of our morale, are irrelevant to our duty, in season and out, to tell the Christian story. The clergy are called to tell that story because they have, in the end, nothing else worthwhile to do. FT

Sapphics, Refusing Politics

For R.

If I have seen geese low on the east horizon,
seen the cold reeds strain in the dawn to follow,
watched the first gray ice of the season take
roots for the winter,

that scene is no great moment in days that fathers
greet a half-born child with a knife and daughters
name the pain-free murder of mothers most
prodigal mercy.

And they that speak strong words in the failing season—
sparking new fires, stoking the dampened embers—
scorn the faint hearts nursing a private flame,
skirting the darkness.

But still the cold reeds sway in the wind and whisper,
"Leave the great voice blazing to stave the winter.
Autumn's own soft music has need of songs
gentle and dying."

—J. Bottum

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Opinion

Contrition in the Age of Spin Control

Mary Ann Glendon

It can hardly have escaped the notice of persons interested in religion and public life that there has been a good deal of public sorrow expressed lately concerning errors or misdeeds committed by representatives or members of the Catholic Church at various times in history. Recently, a diligent Italian journalist counted no less than ninety-four instances where the Pope himself has acknowledged the mistakes and sins of Christians in connection with, among other things, the Crusades, the Inquisition, persecution of the Jews, religious wars, Galileo, and the treatment of women.

This penitential activity is linked to Pope John Paul II's 1994 apostolic letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, where he suggests that the period leading up to the Third Millennium be regarded as "a new Advent," a time for examination of conscience: "It is appropriate that, as the Second Millennium of Christianity draws to a close, the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel, and, instead of offering to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting that were truly forms of counter-witness and scandal."

The Pope's own evocations of historical wrongdoing have been instructive. They are direct, to-the-point, and aimed toward what he sometimes calls the "healing of memories." In every way, they reflect the wisdom and largeness of spirit that are characteristic of his writings and speeches.

Yet, when the Pope presented his plan for a pre-millennial public expression of sorrow to the College of Cardinals, some news stories reported that many cardinals had grave misgivings about the idea. Whether or not that rumor is well-founded, the Pope did anticipate possible criticisms of his plan. He pointed out in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* that while the Church "is holy because of her incorporation into Christ," she is "always in need of being purified," and thus "does not tire of doing penance." He reminded his readers that "acknowledging the weaknesses of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps to strengthen our faith, which alerts us to face today's temptations and challenges."

It would be hard to dispute those propositions. So why should anyone be nervous about a program of purification aimed at healing historical resentments and evangelizing contemporary men and women? My own uneasiness has nothing to do with what the Pope has said, and everything to do with the way in which the expressions of regret he calls for may be manipulated by spin doctors who are no friends of the Church; indeed by persons for whom no apology will ever be enough until Catholics apologize themselves into nonexistence.

My anxiety level escalates when I think of these acknowledgments of past sins in the light of Gertrude Himmelfarb's chilling account of the current state of historical scholarship. History is always an amalgam of fact and myth. But historians seem increasingly to have turned from the search for fact toward free-wheeling, imaginative reconstructions of events. All too many are strategically reinventing history in the service of various agendas. As an elderly Boston lawyer recently remarked to me, "It's getting to be tough times for the dead."

As for the popular image of the Church in history, it must be hard for Catholics brought up on movies and TV to avoid the impression that their Church holds a special niche in some historical hall of shame.

Add to this that most people hear of official expressions of regret as filtered through the news media. Thus, though the Pope himself is careful to speak of sin or error on the part of the Church's members or representatives, rather than the Church in its fullness, that important theological distinction is almost always lost in the transmission.

Sometimes the distinction is deliberately obscured, as in the article on the papacy and the Holocaust in the April 7, 1997 *New Yorker* magazine. Author James Carroll begins with what at first appears to be an appreciation of John Paul II's special relationship with the Jewish people. He recounts the well-known facts: Wojtyla's bravery as a young man in Nazi-occupied Poland, his grief over the Holocaust, his denunciations of anti-Semitism, his establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, his historic visit to the Rome synagogue, his sympathy to demands for withdrawal of the convent at Auschwitz, and his sorrowful admissions that "many Christians" were responsible for Jewish suffering.

Acknowledging John Paul II's exemplary record and enormous popularity, Carroll pretends to lament that the present pontificate is nevertheless "tainted." The "tragedy" of the present pontificate, according to ex-priest Carroll, is that the Pope stopped short of "indicting the Church itself." He quotes dissenting

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theologian Hans Küng's dismissive remark on the Pope's expressions of sorrow: "This Pope likes to make some kind of confession." For Küng, no confession will do until the Pope endorses the bizarre view that Küng himself holds, namely, that "it [is] no longer possible to say the Nazis were responsible without saying the Church is co-responsible." Carroll also complains that John Paul II has not condemned Pius XII by name, as Carroll does in a simplistic, selective account of the role of the papacy during the Holocaust.

Not only is it not enough for the Pope to admit that "many Christians" sinned against Jews—nor that he has said the Church "always acknowledges as her own her sinful sons and daughters"—Carroll even objects to the Pope's mention of acts of heroism by individual Catholics in saving Jews. As for the *New Yorker*, it published this one-sided attack without requiring Carroll to give so much as a hint of the case against ascribing collective guilt to the entire mystical body of Christ. Did it occur to them that they might not get the whole story from one of the corps of Catholics and ex-Catholics who specialize in sniping at the Church? Did it raise any editorial eyebrows that Carroll relied so heavily on a notoriously disgruntled theologian?

Carroll's (and Küng's) real target seems to be the institution of the papacy, and their point of entry the doctrine of papal infallibility. If it was "the Church" and Pius XII that erred or sinned, they suggest, the doctrine cannot stand. But surely both of them recall enough theology to know that none of the historical errors or misdeeds of which they complain falls within the scope of the infallibility doctrine. As Flannery O'Connor once succinctly put it:

> Christ never said that the Church would be operated in a sinless or intelligent way, but that it would not teach error. This does not mean that each and every priest won't teach error, but that the whole Church speaking through the Pope will not teach error in matters of faith.

Whether that crucial point is intentionally obscured, or simply overlooked, the effect is apt to be the same. Some of the faithful begin to wonder: "If the Church was wrong about so many things in the past, maybe she's wrong about what she's teaching now." This is another reason why public acknowledgments of past errors have given rise to anxiety in some quarters of the Church.

Consider, in that connection, the apology contained in the Pope's 1995 *Apostolic Letter to Women*. There, after deploring various affronts to women's dignity throughout the ages, John Paul II says, "If objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry."

I think it is fair to say that that gracious apology has not met with an equally gracious reception in circles wedded to the idea that the Church is a sexist institution. I was surprised, when I took the job of heading the Holy See delegation to the Beijing women's conference, at the number of people who asked me how I could represent an institution that treats women as second-class citizens. When I hear these knee-jerk accusations of sexism in the Church, I always want to ask: "Compared to what other institution?" Wasn't it the Church that gained wide acceptance for the novel idea that marriage was indissoluble—in societies where men had always been permitted by custom to put aside their wives? That fostered the rise of strong, self-governing orders of women religious in the Middle Ages? That pioneered in women's education in countries where most other institutions paid scant attention to girls' intellectual development? No one with the slightest knowledge of history could deny that the advance of Christianity has strengthened the position of women.

In recent years the Holy See has emerged in international settings as one of the world's most vigorous proponents of social and economic justice for women. The Church has been one of the very few international actors to insist both on respect for women's roles in the family, and on support for women's aspirations for full participation in economic and social life.

To all this, the gender police think they have a slam-dunk response: the Church is sexist because it refuses to ordain women. This is not the place for a full discussion of complementarity and the universal call to holiness in relation to ordination. Let's just ask: How does the position of women in the Catholic Church compare with the position of women in churches that ordain women? Strangely, many people who are obsessed with the ordination issue seem uninterested in the vast and increasing array of pastoral and ministerial roles, once reserved to priests, that are now being performed by women. As for the gender police, who make no bones about being preoccupied with power, these expanded opportunities for service do not signify. They want to know about "leadership" positions. Leaving aside the inappropriateness of analogizing the Church to business or governmental institutions, let us consider that question on its own terms. Who runs the second largest health care system in the world? Has it not long been managed almost entirely by dynamic Catholic women executives (mainly religious sisters)? Who runs the world's largest system of private elementary and secondary education? Has it not long been largely run by Catholic women, religious and lay, as teachers, principals, and superintendents? (Incidentally, where did the idea come from that you have to be ordained to be a leader? I expect that the Archbishop of Calcutta is a very capable administrator, but was Mother Teresa less a leader than he?)

Moreover, John Paul II seems determined to push

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the Church further and faster along these lines. He has repeatedly appealed to women "to assume new forms of leadership in service . . . and to all institutions of the Church to welcome this contribution of women." Practicing what he preaches, he has made an unprecedented number of appointments of lay and religious women to pontifical councils and academies.

If the question is whether the Catholic Church has done enough to conform her own structures to the principle that men and women are equal partners in the mystery of redemption, it is clear from his writings that John Paul II would be the first to say no. My point here is that though the Church may fall short of her *own* aspirations, she can hold her head high in comparison to *other* institutions so far as her long record for respect for the dignity and freedom of women is concerned.

That journalists turn a blind eye to this record brings me back to the general problem of public expressions of contrition in the age of spin. It seems to me that Catholic laypeople have a significant responsibility to help make sure that public penitential activities are kept in proper perspective. Often it is the laity who will be in the best position to see when sincere expressions of regret are being opportunistically exploited by persons or groups who are only too eager to help the Church rend her garments and to heap more ashes on the heads of Catholics. Often it will be the laity who are in the best position to set the record straight.

That means, for one thing, recalling that when we sinners ask forgiveness, we are addressing ourselves, first and foremost, to God. (As we say in the Act of Contrition, "but most of all because I have offended Thee, my God.") Expressions of sorrow over past shortcomings do not require abasing ourselves before others, and certainly not before persons who are unwilling to admit any misdeeds of their own. Many historical memories will not be healed until there has been mutual forgiveness.

Setting the record straight also means challenging those who, innocently or deliberately, seek to erase the distinction between the Church and her sinful children. When Flannery O'Connor ran into the likes of Carroll and Küng in the 1950s, she pointed out:

> What you actually seem to demand is that the Church put the kingdom of heaven on earth right here now. Christ was crucified on earth and the Church is crucified by all of us, by her members most particularly, because she is a church of sinners. . . . The Church is founded on Peter who denied Christ three times and couldn't walk on the water by himself. You are expecting his successors to walk on the water.

Truly, it is right that we confess our sins and do penance. We never "tire of repenting" because we and our pilgrim Church are on a trajectory—climbing Jacob's Ladder, striving to "put on the new man," trying to be better Christians today than we were yesterday. Probably the best way to show that we are moving forward on that trajectory is simply, as the Pope says, to "offer to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith."

But so far as our public acts of repentance are concerned, let us be vigilant to prevent them from being hijacked and exploited. Let us join with our sisters and brothers of other faiths to resist all those who peddle the poison of collective guilt. Let us make sure our expressions of sorrow are never permitted to denigrate the role of the Church in history as an overwhelmingly positive force for peace and justice. And above all, let us remember what they are not: they are not apologies for being Catholic.

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Typology and the Public Church

Peter J. Leithart

One of the contributions of twentieth-century Catholic "nouvelle théologie," and of Henri de Lubac and Jean Danielou in particular, is a rehabilitation of the typological exegesis of the Bible practiced by patristic and medieval theologians. Typological interpretation assumes that events and institutions of the Old Testament present (to use Augustine's terminology) "latent" pictures of Christ, and the Christ to whom the Old Testament testifies is the *totus Christus*: Head and Body, Jesus and his Church. In this, the fathers and medieval theologians fully agreed with Paul, who wrote that the history of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness were "things written for our instruction."

Following the apostolic example, the fathers taught that Israel and "daughter Jerusalem"—and all brides and harlots of Old Testament history—manifest the Church under various guises. The fathers could thus view Old Testament history as the Lord's stormy betrothal with his headstrong bride. Augustine made it a basic interpretive principle that the Psalms are now the words of the Savior, now the words of his people crying for salvation, now, mystically, both together. The Psalms form the songbook of the whole Christ who speaks in it "of us, by us, in us, while we speak in him." At its best, then, typolog-

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ical interpretation is quite different from allegory. While Greek allegorists interpreted myths as embodiments of timeless and abstract principles, the fathers plundered the Old Testament to divine the patterns of history. Because the interpretive path runs from old Israel through Christ to the new Israel, moreover, typology assumes that the New Covenant, like the Old, is concerned with a concrete, historical community.

Modern scholarship has approached the Old Testament in a very different manner. Rejecting typology as fanciful and unscientific, many theologians have treated the Old Testament as a historical document with little or no religious significance for the Church. Others, no less hostile to typology, see the transition from Old to New as a change from a historical, material, and social religion to a timeless, spiritual, and individual one. At the turn of this century, in his lectures on the "essence of Christianity," Adolf von Harnack said, "The kingdom of God comes by coming to individuals, making entrance into their souls, and being grasped by them. . . . Everything externally dramatic, all public historical meaning vanish here; all external hope for the future fades also. . . . It is not a matter of angels and devils, nor of principalities and powers, but of God and the soul, of the soul and its God." This is the kernel of Christianity; everything else is dispensable chaff.

Harnack openly admitted that he agreed with the ancient heretic Marcion that the Old Testament was part of the chaff. Though few followed him to this conclusion, Harnack was expressing a widespread belief, one that still finds echoes in unexpected places. "As long as the old covenant was in force the temporal and terrestrial blessings were a part of the promise given to Abraham," but with the advent of Christ and the coming of the Spirit, "the temporal, earthly, typical elements of the old dispensation were dropped from the great house of salvation as scaffolding from the finished edifice." These are the words not of Harnack but of Paul Jewett, a contemporary evangelical theologian of some stature. Yet the similarity is striking. For all their real differences in approach to the Bible, evangelicals are at one with Protestant modernism in their rejection of typology and, frequently enough, in their belief that Christianity is more or less purely internal, a religion of unmediated individual contact with God. Nor is this tangential to evangelicalism: every student of the movement has noted the distinctive emphasis on "new birth," understood as a private encounter with God.

The political implications of this hermeneutical and theological shift are profound. If Christianity is a purely internal religion, if the trajectory is from Old Testament history to the motions of the individual soul, then, as de Lubac brilliantly argued, the whole field of public life is given over to the rough play of secular and impersonal forces. So Schleiermacher, the preacher of what Barth called "consciousness theology," says that the Old Testament is to be utterly repudiated as part of the Christian Bible and, consistently, also castigates those who drag religion from the "depths of the heart into the civil world," where, presumably, it can only be contaminated.

There is yet another hermeneutical alternative to typology, one beginning at a different point but arriving at a similar destination. This method sees a direct fulfillment of the events and institutions of ancient Israel in contemporary political circumstances. The method has a venerable heritage, from Eusebius' celebration of Constantine as the climax of the Gospel, to Charlemagne's belief that he was a new David, to the Puritan preachers who elaborated parallels between Elizabeth I and David, to American preachers who compared the revolution of 1776 to Israel's Exodus from Egypt. This use of the Bible continues to the present day: President Clinton once imagined himself a new Moses, the deliverer of a "new covenant." (Now, perhaps more modestly, he is only a "repairer of the breach.")

Forging a civil religion, in which the holy community is not the Church but the nation, this viewpoint cedes public life to the state. The Church is demoted to national cheerleader and retreats from public action to pursue a ministry of private consolation. It is no accident that Erastian opponents of the Puritans found this hermeneutic useful in supporting royal claims to supremacy over the Church, thereby supporting a reversion to the monistic polis of antiquity whose destruction by Christianity Rousseau found so lamentable. In their own, often politically centered hermeneutics, contemporary evangelicals are sometimes farther from the ancient fathers than from the Anglican Hobbes, who—simultaneously criticizing Catholics, Presbyterians, and Congregational Separatists—thought the greatest abuse of Scripture is to suggest that the promise of Israel has been fulfilled in the Church rather than in the sovereign state.

The typological method—by emphasizing that the Church as a real historical institution and communion was prophesied and typified in the Old Testament—provides theological grounding for the Church's efforts to discipline the state. From a typological viewpoint, it is of the essence of Christianity to occupy public terrain and form a public, albeit "nonpolitical," community. And therefore it is of the essence of Christianity to deny that the public square is dressed in a flag and nothing but a flag. Part of the theological defense of freedom, then, lies in the recovery of typological interpretation, in learning again to repeat, without irony or embarrassment and as a political credo, the words of Paul: "Jerusalem above is free; and she is our mother."

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I Do?

David Blankenhorn

To understand why the United States has the highest divorce rate in the world, go to some weddings and listen to what the brides and grooms say. In particular, listen to the vows: the words of mutual promise exchanged by couples during the marriage ceremony. To a remarkable degree, marriage in America today is exactly what these newlyweds increasingly say that it is: a loving relationship of undetermined duration created of the couple, by the couple, and for the couple.

Our tendency may be to shrug off the significance of formal marriage vows, viewing them as purely ceremonial, without much impact on the "real" marriage. Yet believing that the vow is only some words is similar to believing that the marriage certificate is only a piece of paper. Both views are technically true, but profoundly false. Either, when believed by the marrying couple, is probably a sign of a marriage off to a bad start.

In fact, the marriage vow is deeply connected to the marriage relationship. The vow helps the couple to name and fashion their marriage's innermost meaning. The vow is foundational: the couple's first and most formal effort to define, and therefore understand, exactly what their marriage is.

Recent research into the determinants of marital success, especially the significance in marriage of what the scholars Scott M. Stanley and Howard J. Markman call "dedication," underscores the central importance of the vow. As much as shared interests, or good communications skills, or even erotic attraction or feelings of true love, it is the content and integrity of the dedicating promise itself—what we say and mean when we say "I do"—that shapes the nature and destiny of the marriage.

In recent years, two basic innovations have transformed the marriage vow in the United States. Both innovations are particularly widespread in both mainline and evangelical Protestant churches, in which about half of all U.S. marriages occur.

First, as Barbara Dafoe Whitehead points out in *The Divorce Culture*, marriage vows today commonly downplay or avoid altogether any pledge of marital permanence. The old vow was "till death us do part" or "so long as we both shall live." Most new vows simply leave the question of marital duration unasked and unanswered, as if the issue were either irrelevant or beyond knowing. Other new vows incorporate hopeful but qualified phrases such as "as long as love lasts."

Either way, the underlying philosophy is the same. To pledge marital permanence would be to make a false guarantee. We are in love today, but the future is something that should not or cannot be promised. How long will our love last? We hope forever, but only time will tell. As one bride puts it in a recent book called *Creative Weddings*: "It was important for me not to make promises or to predict the future, but to make intentions and commitments. . . . We avoided using words like 'forever,' but focused on what was honest for the moment and nothing more than that."

The second change is more subtle, but far more profound. Today, growing numbers of couples—perhaps most couples—compose their own vows. My wife and I did in 1986; most couples we know did. I cannot find data to verify the dimensions of this trend, but my sense is that, principally excepting Orthodox Jewish and most Catholic weddings, self-composed vows are more the rule than the exception among newlyweds today. As one wedding book flatly asserts: "The majority of brides and grooms these days are rejecting traditional wedding vows and reciting their own personalized vows instead."

One wedding book by Steven Neel, an ordained minister, advises couples that "Your wedding ceremony can be highly distinctive and individualized if you use your imagination to personalize your expression of love and commitment." Consequently, Neel urges couples today to "accept the challenge of writing your own vows" which "contain the unique expression of your feeling."

It would be hard to exaggerate the symbolic importance of this shift toward self-composed vows. The old vows were created by society and presented to the couple, signifying the goal of conforming the couple to marriage. The new vows are created by the couple and presented to society, signifying the goal of conforming marriage to the couple. The two approaches reflect strikingly divergent views of marriage and of reality itself.

In one view, the vow is prior to the couple. The vow exists on its own, exerting social and sacred authority that is independent of the couple. In this sense, the vow helps to create the couple. For in making the same promise that others before them have made, and that others after them will make, the couple vows on their wedding day to become accountable to an ideal of marriage that is outside of them and bigger than they are.

In the new view, the couple is prior to the promise. The vow is not an external reality, like gravity or the weather, but instead a subjective projection, deriving its meaning solely from the couple. From this perspective, the couple approaches the vow like a painter approaches a canvas. Rather than the vow creating the couple, the couple creates the vow. As a result, each marriage becomes unique, like a painting or a snowflake.

With this one procedural change in the making and exchanging of vows, a ceremony of continuity and idealized forms is displaced by a ceremony of cre-

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ativity and personal expression. Subject and object trade places. Theologically, the transcendent becomes mundane as couples, in effect, become the gods of their own marriages. A reality in which the marriage is larger than the couple is replaced by a reality in which the couple is larger than the marriage.

Of course, many of the motivating ideas behind the new vows are understandable and even admirable. Couples want to avoid hypocrisy. They want the ceremony to be dramatic and personally meaningful. In part, the new vows represent a practical response to the growing phenomenon of mixed-tradition marriages.

But the essence of this change reflects a dramatic shrinking of our idea of marriage. With the new vows, the robust expectation of marital permanence shrinks to a frail, often unstated hope. Marriage as a vital communal institution shrinks to marriage as a purely private relationship. Marriage as something that defines me shrinks to something that I define.

Finally, as the idea of marriage gets weaker, so does the reality. In this sense, the new vows are important philosophical authorizations for our divorce culture. They are both minor causes and revealing results of a society in which marriage as an institution is decomposing before our eyes.

Who is to blame for this transformation of the vow? There are three possible answers: society, the couples, and the pastors. All things considered, I suggest that we blame the clergy.

I understand, of course, that many large social forces and institutions, from trash TV to the legal profession, are conspiring to weaken and privatize marriage. I also understand why many couples might aspire to confect, rather than inherit, the meaning of their marriage. But I do not understand why the clergy, the custodians of our marriage tradition, so willingly relinquish their authority and, in effect, collaborate in their own marginalization. Why have the teachers agreed to trade places with the students?

Much of the content of contemporary weddings, of which vows are only one aspect, stems from a massive transfer of authority—generally, from the community to the individual, and specifically, from the pastor to the couple. As the brides' magazines and wedding books endlessly emphasize: "It's *your* day!" Throughout this advice literature, the master recommendation is to "personalize" your wedding.

By accepting and even embracing these ideas, many pastors become little more than entertainers, bit players, in the weddings they conduct and in the marriages they launch. Many couples choose a church for their wedding primarily on the basis of architecture. Cut loose from enduring communal forms, which are the foundations of all true ceremony, weddings today increasingly become occasions for what Judith Martin calls "amateur theatrics about sex and philosophy." Consequently, despite the sincere hopes and the intensive planning, what is most important about the wedding is increasingly overshadowed. The party gets bigger; the embrace of the marital promise gets smaller.

What is to be done? Here are four proposals. First, individual pastors, and ultimately denominational leaders, should reclaim the historic responsibility inhering in communities of faith to promulgate and maintain the integrity of the marriage vows exchanged in their churches. Central to this reclamation would be the revival of the vow of marital permanence.

Second, pastors should agree to marry couples in their churches only when at least one member of the couple is also a member of the church. Third, pastors should require all couples who marry in their churches to participate in a serious program of church-sponsored premarital education. And finally, individual churches should formally embrace the goal of strengthening marriage and lowering the divorce rate in their congregation, specifically through on-going programs aimed at marital enrichment and "marriage saving," and generally by seeking to create a marriage culture within the faith community that is distinct from the divorce culture in the larger society. (Pastors can also take heart from growing signs of public dissatisfaction with the divorce culture, such as Louisiana's new "covenant marriage" law in which individual couples can now choose to opt out of the no-fault system and enter into a legally more binding marriage.)

Together, these policies would convey a clear message to engaged couples. Couples who get married here learn what marriage is. Couples who get married here understand and accept as their own the marriage promise that this community of faith requires, including the vow of marital permanence. Couples who get married here become part of a community that affirms and supports marriage. As a result, couples who get married here are more likely to be able to keep their promises, in part because they make promises worth keeping.

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Episcopalians: The Leftward Center

William Murchison

The modern Episcopal Church is the oddest of churches: scrupulous about maintaining tradition in matters of worship and dress, feverish about rejecting tradition when a given religious belief contradicts the spirit of the times.

The Episcopal descent into spiritual incoherence is one of the more remarkable religious occurrences of the late twentieth century. At its triennial General Convention, held in Philadelphia this July, the church came close to scraping bottom. Much of the secular media praised the Convention as moderate. The calm that indeed prevailed was due mostly to the inability of traditionalists to feel astonishment at anything such a gathering might produce. In recent years, Episcopalians have seen it all: bishops proudly ordaining active homosexuals and an official church court declaring (with more than a tinge of satisfaction) that no discernible doctrine prohibits such a practice; general apathy toward moral issues such as abortion that engage other Christians; disrespect for scriptural authority; sluggishness in evangelizing; the trial and conviction of the national church treasurer on charges of embezzling $2.1 million to support herself and her Episcopal priest-husband; bishops implicated in adultery; seminary approval of homosexual living arrangements for students; a major East Coast diocese riven by the style and agenda of its radical bishop. Unsurprisingly, membership in America's formerly most prestigious church has fallen by a third since 1965.

In Philadelphia this year, the familiar pattern of swinging with the times continued. A call to authorize liturgies for the blessing of same-sex unions failed by a single vote, and the church went on to apologize for shaming and mistreating homosexuals. Huge majorities in both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies rammed through a canonical change intended to force women's ordination (a practice the Episcopal Church adopted only twenty-one years ago) on any diocese or parish backward enough to object. Near the end of Convention, the Episcopal gay-rights organization Integrity rejoiced over such achievements. "We've won," boasted Bishop Joe Morris Doss of New Jersey (the same bishop whose behavior has divided his flock into pro-Doss and anti-Doss factions).

Outgoing Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning, while hymning his commitment to "a church where there is respect and room for everyone," got in a few well-placed licks at the traditionalists. In the church's "struggles around sexuality," Browning brooded, "we have been diverted by fear and, let me name it, by hate. And I have wondered if this diversion does not come from the evil from which we pray daily for God's deliverance." Browning eschewed the word "homophobia," but the members of the Convention knew precisely what he meant to imply: continued resistance to gay rights shames and demeans the church.

This sally proved too much for Bishop Andrew Fairfield of North Dakota, the lone dissenter from the ecclesial court's decision last year that "core doctrine" in the Episcopal Church does not forbid the ordination of noncelibate gays. Fairfield said he felt "hurt and offended and further marginalized" by Browning's remarks. Some forty fellow bishops, out of two hundred present, rose to their feet in support of Fairfield. One of these stingingly accused Browning of violating his own first principle of inclusivity.

The next presiding bishop, who takes over in January, is a man of gentler mien and softer tongue than Browning. However, Bishop Frank T. Griswold III of Chicago holds approximately the same convictions as his predecessor on what seem to nontraditionalists the great issues of the day, gay rights foremost among them. Newspaper accounts of Griswold's election portrayed him as a "moderate" and "centrist," rather than a liberal. These encomia chiefly show how far and how fast the Episcopal center has moved to the left. "What may be called the liberationist agenda or human rights agenda has entered the mainstream of the Episcopal Church," as the Anglican theologian Peter Toon observes. "The major casualty has been biblical faith and morality. . . . At the next Convention the center will be where the left is today. . . . Those who are right of center in 1997 will be the extreme right in 2000, fighting to keep some recognition in the church of both traditional sexual morality and biblical names for God."

True enough, in the election for presiding bishop, Griswold prevailed by only 110-96 over Herbert Thompson of Southern Ohio—a bishop who, though hardly a right-wing traditionalist, generally sides with the traditionalists on moral issues. But the conservative bishops now number fewer than fifty, and the rest of Thompson's support came from self-described "liberals" for reasons of friendship (Thompson is genial), race (he is black), or just unhappiness, as one bishop put it, "with the machine" of the Episcopal bureaucracy.

What happened on the floor of this year's General Convention may prove far less interesting than what happened outside—where traditionalists of various stripes began to link arms. The resistance movement—the evangelical-catholic underground—coalesced well in advance of Convention, arguing for a scriptural view of the church's obligations: gospel proclamation, conversion, and a renewed emphasis

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on sin, without which the concept of redemption loses meaning. When Convention voted for coercion of the four dioceses where women priests remain unwelcome, one traditionalist observed, "I think we should all be grateful for the clarity which this vote gives to all traditional Anglicans. At least we know what our rights are: We have the right to remain silent." (An impressive number of women priests argued against enforcing conformity on women's ordination. Opponents of the practice published a letter commending their charity.)

Immediately after Convention adjourned, traditionalists assembled at the Church of the Good Shepherd in the Philadelphia suburbs. Convoked by the Episcopal Synod of America (an eight-year-old network of traditionalists), the meeting quickly produced the "Good Shepherd Statement." Arguing that the Episcopal Church's writ runs less far than the church might suppose, the Statement declares that "The Seventy-Second General Convention has passed judgment upon itself"—refusing "to uphold orthodox doctrine and restore godly discipline, while acting to persecute the faithful." Without quitting the national church formally, the Synod declares "the emergence of an orthodox Province within the Anglican Communion in America"—one to be run on principles very different from Bishop Browning's.

In the emerging province, however much presiding bishops and conventions may threaten or cajole, the all-male priesthood will be faithfully preserved, and scriptural standards for ordination and matrimony will be maintained. The province is theological, not geographical (though it rests, practically speaking, on the four non-women-ordaining dioceses: Fort Worth, Texas; Quincy, Illinois; San Joaquin, California; and Eau Claire, Wisconsin). The province may plant new congregations under the noses of liberal bishops. As occasion requires, its own bishops will take under their protective wings traditionalist parishes outside their geographical jurisdictions, while the province means to limit, politely but firmly, the money contributed by its members to the national church. (This last practice, more than any other, may rouse the ire of the establishment; the official Episcopal Church, already struggling with budget cuts, can ill afford more.)

There is no model anywhere in Christian history for such an undertaking as the new province. But it may work better than skeptics think. The Anglo-Catholics who preponderate in the Synod have allied themselves with friendly non-Catholics who, even if they defend women's ordination, understand the extent of the national church's departure from the faith. These non-catholics have themselves joined together as the American Anglican Council, and near Convention's end, their president, Bishop James M. Stanton of Dallas, pledged to "maintain communion with those bishops who, on the basis of their conscience, cannot ordain or license women to serve in the priesthood under their oversight." Talking over the bishops' heads to Episcopalians unwilling to abandon the historic moral teaching and standards of Christianity, Stanton said, "We will not abandon you, or our determination to guard the faith once delivered to the saints." He quoted approvingly a young woman who had testified at an open hearing on sexuality questions: "I will stay in the church, but I will not go against God's Word."

Confusion will for a time beset and envelop Episcopalianism. Clarity is on the way, even so. A "suburb of dissent" (W. H. Auden's phrase) has been planted inside the established city of the Episcopal Church. The new development could be swallowed up by weeds—or it could spread joyfully, invigoratingly beyond the city limits, coming eventually to overshadow the city itself. One thing is plain: Well before Philadelphia, the contemporary Episcopal Church's style and relationships had become stumbling blocks rather than aids to conversion and witness; something had to change dramatically. Now it has.

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The Denomination Called Catholic

David R. Carlin

By now, nearly everyone has heard the statistics. From the end of Vatican II in 1965 to the present, the American Catholic Church has experienced dramatic drops in attendance at Sunday Mass, per capita contributions, the number of Catholic elementary and secondary schools, the population of priests and nuns, enrollment in seminaries and religious orders, the circulation of Catholic periodicals. Many Catholic colleges and universities, it is true, have held their own and even prospered, but their success has come in many cases at the price of watering down their distinctively Catholic character.

By now, nearly everyone has heard as well what may be called "the liberal agenda for Catholic reform": married priests, female priests, semi-popular election of bishops, democratization of church authority, relative autonomy for national churches, a downgrading of papal authority, frequent ecumenical councils or synods, greater tolerance for theological dissent, total repeal of the ban on contraception, a moral code more flexible about abortion, homosexuality, and premarital sex. The reformers consistently claim that adoption of their agenda will reverse the decline of American Catholicism, filling the pews with faithful laity and filling the seminaries with faithful priests.

What these reform proposals boil down to is: a call to Protestantize the American Catholic Church—or, to put it more precisely, a call to transform the Catholic Church so that it resembles the *liberal* or *mainline* Protestant churches. The fact remains, however, that anyone who imagines such a transformation will improve Catholic numbers has paid no attention to the mainline churches, whose statistics have been discouraging for a long time and are getting worse. They are so bad, in fact, that we may be living through an era that, in retrospect, will have to be described as the age of the disintegration of mainline Protestantism.

The liberal reform proposals are based on the rather odd notion that what liberal Catholics prefer, Catholics in general prefer. If the history and current status of the mainline Protestant churches teach us anything, they teach us that a Catholic Church reformed according to a liberal Protestant model would prove unappealing to everyone except the reformers themselves and the small number who share their rather specialized ecclesiastical sensibility.

Sociologists of religion conventionally distinguish three forms of organized religion: the *church*, the *sect*, and the *denomination*. Some religions offer pure examples of one of these three types, but often they change with time, drifting from one type to another. As a result, many religions turn out to be mixed, a combination of two and sometimes all three types.

The development of this sociological typology began nearly a century ago with certain German scholars—notably Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch—who were studying the Reformation. They found they had to make a distinction between two radically different forms of Protestantism. On the one hand were those religions—like the Church of England or the Lutheran Church in northern Germany—organized on a territorial basis with the premise that everyone ought to be a member of the body politic's official church. On the other hand were those religions—like the Baptists, Quakers, or Mennonites—organized on a "gathered" basis where membership was voluntary, not automatic, and where only the "elect" belonged, not the entire population of the realm. Troeltsch and Weber assigned the term "church" to the territorial religions and "sect" to the gathered religions.

It turns out, however, that church and sect differ in more than how they get their members. Churches are large, embracing at their limit all members of a soci-

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ety, while sects are small. Churches tend to be strongly ritualistic, while sects downplay ritualism. Churches emphasize hierarchical authority, drawing a sharp distinction between clergy and laity, while sects are more democratic, de-emphasizing the clergy/laity distinction. Churches prefer centralization, sects congregational autonomy. Churches run to ornate buildings, sects to simplicity. Sects emphasize the subjective side of religion, especially the cultivation of strong religious feelings, while churches are wary of emotional religion. Sects have a strong sense of in-group solidarity that is far weaker in churches. Sects draw a sharp distinction between themselves and the outside world—a distinction churches can hardly be expected to draw since their members include the whole social world. The average sectarian takes religion far more seriously than does the average church member, a difference in psychological investment that is reflected in the far higher levels of time and money contributed by sectarians.

When sociologists tried to apply in America this distinction between churches and sects, they found it an imperfect fit. There are plenty of sects in the United States: this country has been the world's greatest breeding ground of Protestant sects. But there is no American church, if only because no American religion ever embraced a majority of Americans. A further conceptual problem, however, is that the United States—and, increasingly, other parts of the world—have a third form of religion, neither church nor sect. This third form, whatever resemblances it has to the other two, differs from them in the quite fundamental respect of tolerance.

Both church and sect claim to be the sole true religion. They teach their members that outside their particular religion there is no salvation, or at least that outside their religion the road to salvation is much steeper and rockier. God, they contend, does not agree with the great American religious slogan of the 1950s: "Attend the church of your choice." Instead God's slogan is: "Attend the church of *My* choice." Churches and sects tend equally to religious intolerance. For centuries churches translated this intolerance into religious persecution, while sects have often championed religious freedom; but this is largely because sects were never strong enough to persecute others, and if they meant to have freedom for themselves they would have to insist on freedom for all. If churches no longer persecute and sects rarely or never did, this is not because they now regard all religions as equally meritorious. While not legally intolerant, they remain "intolerant" and "judgmental" at the level of extra-legal evaluation.

By contrast, American "third form" religions are marked by high levels of tolerance. The attitude typical of their members is something like this: "It is good to have a religion. We happen to prefer ours, but we think it's fine that you prefer yours. The important thing is that we honor God, not what building we use when giving this honor." These third-form religions are called "denominations," and the denominational attitude has long flourished among members of the so-called mainline churches: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, etc.

For a long time American Catholics stood outside this circle of genial tolerance. Catholicism clung to its "first form" habit of mind, insisting that it was the one true church—which was viewed by otherwise tolerant Protestants as unmannerly at best and dangerous at worst. But with time Catholics softened and Protestants mellowed. In the 1960s, with the election of John Kennedy, the coming of Vatican II, and the disappearance of the Catholic ghetto, the mutual suspicions of Catholics and mainline Protestants largely evaporated. Catholics entered the hitherto all-Protestant circle of interdenominational tolerance.

In other words, American Catholicism, which had striven to be a church in a society that had no room for churches, had become a denomination. This is not to say that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a formal statement in which they renounced their claim to belong to the one true church. But denominationalism is a matter more of practice and attitude than of credal formulas. For the last quarter century Catholics, both clerical and lay, have tended to think and act as though Catholicism is simply the biggest of America's many denominations.

Barring an unlikely conversion of all Americans to Catholicism, the Catholic Church can never become *the* church in this country. For better or worse, the United States has always been and likely always will be a nation of incorrigible religious pluralism.

Neither can the American Catholic Church become a sect, for the simple reason that the sectarian religious style is completely alien to Catholicism. It is true that during its long exclusion from the American mainstream, Catholicism took on such traits of sectarianism as enhanced solidarity and suspicion of outsiders. But these feelings were never as strong as those in a genuine sect. A "quasi-ghetto" response is the one Catholicism typically makes in social situations where the powers that be are experienced as alien and hostile: British-ruled Ireland and Communist-ruled Poland are other examples. In the absence of an anti-Catholic political or social regime, it is virtually impossible for American Catholicism to regain even the limited sectarian traits it had under the old Protestant establishment.

Here is the great Catholic problem: if the Catholic Church in America cannot be a church, and will not be a sect, it must settle for a denomination. The trouble is that denominationalism is inherently unstable: Almost from its inception it enters into a state of decline that eventually becomes precipitous, leading to something like full disintegration. The history of denominationalism in America is a history of

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decline. At first the denomination begins a relative decline, shrinking as a percentage of the population. Eventually this becomes an absolute decline in numbers, a phenomenon that has hit nearly all mainline Protestant denominations in the last thirty years. And if this absolute decline cannot be arrested, it finally turns into a rout.

The reasons for this pattern of decline are debatable, but the fact of it is not. A vivid illustration is the transformation of the Methodists from sect to denomination. Beginning as a sect in the eighteenth century and remaining one through much of the nineteenth, the Methodists entered a golden age of growth and expansion. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, they began to shake off their old sectarian narrowness in order to "progress" to denominationalism. In the course of the next century, Methodism became a thoroughgoing denomination. The price for "going mainline" has been numerical decline, at first a relative decline and then, since the 1960s, a reduction in absolute numbers.

There is at least some relation between denominational decline and social class. The denominational style seems more congenial to those with somewhat higher levels of education, occupation, and income, while the sectarian style suits those of lower social rank. When families rise from lower to higher social rank (a common phenomenon in sectarianism, with its typically strict moral code and strong in-group support), the upgrading causes later generations to feel uncomfortable with their religion's sectarian style, and they demand a shift to something more denominational. And the more socially and economically successful they become, the more denominational they insist their religion be. The result, not surprisingly, is decline. America's higher social classes are generally "moderate" in religious style, not "enthusiastic." The moderate denominations, considering zeal a sign of social vulgarity, tend not to spread the faith through missionary activity; they will not even make hearty efforts to instill the faith in their own children. By contrast, the enthusiastic sects, full of zeal, spare no efforts in proselytizing both their own children and the world at large.

The latitudinarian spirit of tolerance that lies at the heart of denominationalism is fatal in the long run, for the tolerant find it difficult to halt their nonjudgmentalism short of disaster. The denominationalists begin by being broadly tolerant of other religions, which makes it difficult to be enthusiastic for their own. They typically move to being broadly tolerant of unorthodox views and practices within their own religion: If "heresy" is fine in other religions, how can it be condemned at home? Finally, denominationalists become tolerant of views and practices that are quite nonreligious and even antireligious. If all religions are equally meritorious and all heresies equally tolerable, then approval cannot be withheld from beliefs that are hardly religious at all—beliefs that lie far closer to the regions of agnosticism and atheism than to the regions of orthodox Christianity. And how then can a line be drawn between religion in general and irreligion, insisting that those who fall on the wrong side of the line are outside the pale of respectability?

There is something attractive in this tolerance—for those who are intellectually curious and temperamentally cosmopolitan, something very attractive indeed. But it is no way to make religions numerically prosperous. And even on its own terms there turns out to be something peculiar about this tolerance in actual practice. The denominational mentality in full bloom seems tolerant of nearly everything except the sectarians. Liberal Protestants and liberal Catholics alike tend to be more open to outright secularism than to sectarian Protestantism; and the more liberal the Protestant or Catholic in question, the more true this is. The secularist is regarded as an ally in a great struggle for maximum tolerance and mutual respect, while the sectarian is viewed as a misguided and often perverse enemy.

Having embraced denominationalism, American Catholicism has begun to mirror the decline we have seen over and over again in the mainline Protestant churches. And since an escape from denominationalism is unknown in American history, the decline appears to be irreversible.

As both a Catholic and an American, however, I am reluctant to accept this conclusion. And there are in fact four reasons for being somewhat more optimistic about the long-term future of Catholicism in the United States.

The first reason lies in the fact that we have already seen the effect of the Protestant denominational experience. When the more liberal Protestant churches started on the denominational high road in the nineteenth century, it was with no intention of weakening their essential Christian content. Quite the opposite, they hoped to become more purely Christian than ever: on the one hand, purging the faith of sectarian excrescences while retaining the pure core of Christian doctrine; and on the other fulfilling the gospel injunction "that all may be one" (an ideal sectarians seemed to care little about). It is easy enough to see now that the logic of denominationalism gradually drains the Christianity out of Christian churches and empties church pews. But this is no proof that the old champions of denominationalism were either fools or anti-Christians. All it proves is that people of good will make mistakes when not in possession of infallible crystal balls.

But American Catholicism does not need crystal balls. All it needs is an awareness of the history of denominational Protestantism. Since liberal Protestants have already tried the experiment, there is no

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need for Catholics to repeat it. If Catholics are neither fools nor anti-Christians, they will avoid carrying their religion's current denominational tendency through to the bitter end. It may not be clear at the moment just *what* needs to be done; but an awareness that *something* needs to be done is a first step in the right direction.

The second reason for Catholic hope comes with the recruits from mainline Protestantism. As liberal Protestantism shows a continuing incapacity to resist secularism both in society and in the churches themselves, anti-secularist members of these churches will be faced with three options. One is to stay and fight, a fight that becomes increasingly discouraging with the passage of time. A second is to switch by joining a conservative Protestant sect. And a third is to join the Catholics. There is no way of predicting what proportions will choose which option, but Catholicism is already getting its share. These new Catholics are deliberate and self-conscious opponents of the denominational ideal, and their mere presence in the Church slows the Catholic drift toward absolute denominationalism. If they are religious intellectuals, their writing, teaching, and preaching slow it down even more. This is nothing new—in the last two centuries some of the most effective Catholic opponents of liberal religion have come from the outside: John Henry Newman in England, Jacques Maritain in France, and others.

A third reason for Catholics not to despair lies in the fact that Catholicism is far more international than any Protestant denomination. This greater internationalism is not simply a matter of a more numerous and widespread membership, but also of its international governance. There is nothing in the Protestant world that corresponds to the Vatican, and American Catholicism lacks the national independence that Protestant denominations have always had. While Catholicism in the United States may be able to travel a certain distance down the denominational road, it will not be able to go all the way unless it is able to carry the rest of the Catholic world, including Rome itself, with it. And this is not a likely prospect.

The fourth reason things may not be as bad as they seem is the structure of government in the Catholic Church. A combination of papal monarchy and an aristocracy of bishops, Catholicism may be the least democratic of contemporary Christian churches. At the diocesan level, the bishops become lesser monarchs and their priests a lesser aristocracy. And all these monarchs and aristocrats compose an order sharply differentiated from the Church's lay majority by being ordained, celibate, and all-male.

Regarding things from a purely sociological point of view, we may say that thoroughgoing denominationalization of the Catholic Church is against the interests of the clerical order. If the Catholic Church makes no distinctive claims to truth and legitimacy, why should the authority of this clerical order be tolerated? Why not become like Protestant denominations, with a democratized and decentralized authority shifted from pope, bishop, and priest in the direction of the laity? It is not unusual to find priests and even bishops eager to make the shift. But a screening process for promotion guarantees that little of this eagerness is found in the upper ranks of the Church, and the Catholic clerical order is unlikely to embrace the denominational ideal in a deliberate and intentional way unless two or three popes in a row lead the way.

These four reasons for hope—the prior knowledge of Protestant denominationalism, the influx of anti-denominational converts, the undenominational internationalism of Catholicism, and the conservative structure of the Catholic hierarchy—constitute hope, not solid expectation, much less scientific prediction. If American Catholicism is to save itself, it must deliberately reject denominationalism. But it cannot do this unless it can find some other path to follow, and in the United States it can become neither a local sect nor a national American church. Finding some fourth way of being a religious organization will be a challenge of enormous proportions. Yet unless this challenge is met, the future of American Catholicism will be a relentless erosion of Christian content and a steady decline in membership.

A religion cannot avoid reduction to denominational status unless it is willing to claim to be *better* than all competing religions. But in contemporary America, denominationalized and democratized as it is, it is considered bad religious manners to make this claim; and most Catholics, both clergy and laity, are understandably reluctant to appear unmannerly in the eyes of their non-Catholic neighbors. Sectarian Protestants willing to claim that their faith is better than that of their neighbors pay the price of strong social disapproval and any number of negative stereotypes.

If American Catholicism is to find its "fourth way," Catholics will have to learn both how to claim to belong to a religion that is better than other religions and to do so in such a way as to give minimal offense to their non-Catholic neighbors. It is easy to assert, as sects and churches traditionally have, that one religion is true and all others false. It is equally easy to claim, as denominations do, that many religions are equally true. What is difficult is to find a way to say, in the neighborly way the American situation demands, that while many religions have a partial grasp of the truth, only one's own sees truth steady and sees it whole. Yet unless American Catholics master the knack of making this tactful fourth way assertion, they will see their religion continue down the road toward denominationalism and decline. FT

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The Unraveling of Scientific Materialism

Phillip E. Johnson

In a retrospective essay on Carl Sagan in the January 9, 1997 *New York Review of Books*, Harvard Genetics Professor Richard Lewontin tells how he first met Sagan at a public debate in Arkansas in 1964. The two young scientists had been coaxed by senior colleagues to go to Little Rock to debate the affirmative side of the question: "RESOLVED, that the theory of evolution is as proved as is the fact that the earth goes around the sun." Their main opponent was a biology professor from a fundamentalist college, with a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in Zoology. Lewontin reports no details from the debate, except to say that "despite our absolutely compelling arguments, the audience unaccountably voted for the opposition."

Of course, Lewontin and Sagan attributed the vote to the audience's prejudice in favor of creationism. The resolution was framed in such a way, however, that the affirmative side should have lost even if the jury had been composed of Ivy League philosophy professors. How could the theory of evolution even conceivably be "proved" to the same degree as "the fact that the earth goes around the sun"? The latter is an observable feature of present-day reality, whereas the former deals primarily with non-repeatable events of the very distant past. The appropriate comparison would be between the theory of evolution and the accepted theory of the origin of the solar system.

If "evolution" referred only to currently observable phenomena like domestic animal breeding or finch-beak variation, then winning the debate should have been no problem for Lewontin and Sagan even with a fundamentalist jury. The statement "We breed a great variety of dogs," which rests on direct observation, is much easier to prove than the statement that the earth goes around the sun, which requires sophisticated reasoning. Not even the strictest biblical literalists deny the bred varieties of dogs, the variation of finch beaks, and similar instances within types. The more controversial claims of large-scale evolution are what arouse skepticism. Scientists may think they have good reasons for believing that living organisms evolved naturally from nonliving chemicals, or that complex organs evolved by the accumulation of micromutations through natural selection, but having reasons is not the same as having proof. I have seen people, previously inclined to believe whatever "science says," become skeptical when they realize that the scientists actually do seem to think that variations in finch beaks or peppered moths, or the mere existence of fossils, proves all the vast claims of "evolution." It is as though the scientists, so confident in their answers, simply do not understand the question.

Carl Sagan described the theory of evolution in his final book as the doctrine that "human beings (and all the other species) have slowly evolved by natural processes from a succession of more ancient beings with no divine intervention needed along the way." It is the alleged absence of divine intervention throughout the history of life—the strict *materialism* of the orthodox theory—that explains why a great many people, only some of whom are biblical fundamentalists, think that Darwinian evolution (beyond the micro level) is basically materialistic philosophy disguised as scientific fact. Sagan himself worried about opinion polls showing that only about 10 percent of Americans believe in a strictly materialistic evolutionary process, and, as Lewontin's anecdote concedes, some of the doubters have advanced degrees in the relevant sciences. Dissent as widespread as that must rest on something less easily remedied than mere ignorance of facts.

Lewontin eventually parted company with Sagan over how to explain why the theory of evolution seems so obviously true to mainstream scientists and

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so doubtful to much of the public. Sagan attributed the persistence of unbelief to ignorance and hucksterism and set out to cure the problem with popular books, magazine articles, and television programs promoting the virtues of mainstream science over its fringe rivals. Lewontin, a Marxist whose philosophical sophistication exceeds that of Sagan by several orders of magnitude, came to see the issue as essentially one of basic intellectual commitment rather than factual knowledge.

The reason for opposition to scientific accounts of our origins, according to Lewontin, is not that people are ignorant of facts, but that they have not learned to think from the right starting point. In his words, "The primary problem is not to provide the public with the knowledge of how far it is to the nearest star and what genes are made of. . . . Rather, the problem is to get them to reject irrational and supernatural explanations of the world, the demons that exist only in their imaginations, and to accept a social and intellectual apparatus, Science, as the only begetter of truth." What the public needs to learn is that, like it or not, "We exist as material beings in a material world, all of whose phenomena are the consequences of material relations among material entities." In a word, the public needs to accept materialism, which means that they must put God (whom Lewontin calls the "Supreme Extraterrestrial") in the trash can of history where such myths belong.

Although Lewontin wants the public to accept science as the only source of truth, he freely admits that mainstream science itself is not free of the hokum that Sagan so often found in fringe science. As examples he cites three influential scientists who are particularly successful at writing for the public: E. O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins, and Lewis Thomas,

> each of whom has put unsubstantiated assertions or counterfactual claims at the very center of the stories they have retailed in the market. Wilson's *Sociobiology* and *On Human Nature* rest on the surface of a quaking marsh of unsupported claims about the genetic determination of everything from altruism to xenophobia. Dawkins' vulgarizations of Darwinism speak of nothing in evolution but an inexorable ascendancy of genes that are selectively superior, while the entire body of technical advance in experimental and theoretical evolutionary genetics of the last fifty years has moved in the direction of emphasizing nonselective forces in evolution. Thomas, in various essays, propagandized for the success of modern scientific medicine in eliminating death from disease, while the unchallenged statistical compilations on mortality show that in Europe and North America infectious diseases . . . had ceased to be major causes of mortality by the early decades of the twentieth century.

Lewontin laments that even scientists frequently cannot judge the reliability of scientific claims outside their fields of speciality, and have to take the word of recognized authorities on faith. "Who am I to believe about quantum physics if not Steven Weinberg, or about the solar system if not Carl Sagan? What worries me is that they may believe what Dawkins and Wilson tell them about evolution."

One major living scientific popularizer whom Lewontin does *not* trash is his Harvard colleague and political ally Stephen Jay Gould. Just to fill out the picture, however, it seems that admirers of Dawkins have as low an opinion of Gould as Lewontin has of Dawkins or Wilson. According to a 1994 essay in the *New York Review of Books* by John Maynard Smith, the dean of British neo-Darwinists, "the evolutionary biologists with whom I have discussed his [Gould's] work tend to see him as a man whose ideas are so confused as to be hardly worth bothering with, but as one who should not be publicly criticized because he is at least on our side against the creationists. All this would not matter, were it not that he is giving non-biologists a largely false picture of the state of evolutionary theory." Lewontin fears that non-biologists will fail to recognize that Dawkins is peddling pseudoscience; Maynard Smith fears exactly the same of Gould.

If eminent experts say that evolution according to Gould is too confused to be worth bothering about, and others equally eminent say that evolution according to Dawkins rests on unsubstantiated assertions and counterfactual claims, the public can hardly be blamed for suspecting that grand-scale evolution may rest on something less impressive than rock-solid, unimpeachable fact. Lewontin confirms this suspicion by explaining why "we" (i.e., the kind of people who read the *New York Review*) reject out of hand the view of those who think they see the hand of the Creator in the material world:

> We take the side of science *in spite of* the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite of* its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite of* the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door. The eminent Kant scholar Lewis Beck used to say that anyone who could believe in

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> God could believe in anything. To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be ruptured, that miracles may happen.

That paragraph is the most insightful statement of what is at issue in the creation/evolution controversy that I have ever read from a senior figure in the scientific establishment. It explains neatly how the theory of evolution can seem so certain to scientific insiders, and so shaky to the outsiders. For scientific materialists *the materialism comes first; the science comes thereafter.* We might more accurately term them "materialists employing science." And if materialism is true, then some materialistic theory of evolution has to be true simply as a matter of logical deduction, regardless of the evidence. That theory will necessarily be at least roughly like neo-Darwinism, in that it will have to involve some combination of random changes and law-like processes capable of producing complicated organisms that (in Dawkins' words) "give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose."

The prior commitment explains why evolutionary scientists are not disturbed when they learn that the fossil record does not provide examples of gradual macroevolutionary transformation, despite decades of determined effort by paleontologists to confirm neo-Darwinian presuppositions. That is also why biological chemists like Stanley Miller continue in confidence even when geochemists tell them that the early earth did not have the oxygen-free atmosphere essential for producing the chemicals required by the theory of the origin of life in a prebiotic soup. They reason that there had to be some source (comets?) capable of providing the needed molecules, because otherwise life would not have evolved. When evidence showed that the period available on the early earth for the evolution of life was extremely brief in comparison to the time previously posited for chemical evolution scenarios, Carl Sagan calmly concluded that the chemical evolution of life must be easier than we had supposed, because it happened so rapidly on the early earth.

That is also why neo-Darwinists like Richard Dawkins are not troubled by the Cambrian Explosion, where all the invertebrate animal groups appear suddenly and without identifiable ancestors. Whatever the fossil record may suggest, those Cambrian animals had to evolve by accepted neo-Darwinian means, which is to say by material processes requiring no intelligent guidance or supernatural input. Materialist philosophy demands no less. That is also why Niles Eldredge, surveying the absence of evidence for macroevolutionary transformations in the rich marine invertebrate fossil record, can observe that "evolution always seems to happen somewhere else," and then describe himself on the very next page as a "knee-jerk neo-Darwinist." Finally, that is why Darwinists do not take critics of materialist evolution seriously, but speculate instead about "hidden agendas" and resort immediately to ridicule. In their minds, to question materialism is to question reality. All these specific points are illustrations of what it means to say that "we" have an a priori commitment to materialism.

The scientific leadership cannot afford to disclose that commitment frankly to the public. Imagine what chance the affirmative side would have if the question for public debate were rephrased candidly as "RESOLVED, that everyone should adopt an a priori commitment to materialism." Everyone would see what many now sense dimly: that a methodological premise useful for limited purposes has been expanded to form a metaphysical absolute. Of course people who define science as the search for materialistic explanations will find it useful to assume that such explanations always exist. To suppose that a philosophical preference can validate a cherished scientific theory is to define "science" as a way of supporting prejudice. Yet that is exactly what the Darwinists seem to be doing, when their evidence is evaluated by critics who are willing to question materialism.

One of those critics, bearing impeccable scientific credentials, is Michael Behe, who argues that complex molecular systems (such as bacterial and protozoan flagella, immune systems, blood clotting, and cellular transport) are "irreducibly complex." This means that the systems incorporate elements that interact with each other in such complex ways that it is impossible to describe detailed, testable Darwinian mechanisms for their evolution. (My review of Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* appeared in FT, October 1996.) Never mind for now whether you think that Behe's argument can prevail over sustained opposition from the materialists. The primary dispute is not over who is going to win, but about whether the argument can even get started. If we know a priori that materialism is true, then contrary evidence properly belongs under the rug, where it has always duly been swept.

For Lewontin, the public's determined resistance to scientific materialism constitutes "a deep problem in democratic self-governance." Quoting Jesus' words from the Gospel of John, he thinks that "the truth that makes us free" is not an accumulation of knowledge, but a metaphysical understanding (i.e., materialism) that sets us free from belief in supernatural entities like God. How is the scientific elite to persuade or bamboozle the public to accept the crucial starting point? Lewontin turns for guidance to the most prestigious of all opponents of democracy, Plato. In his dialogue the *Gorgias*, Plato reports a debate between the rationalist Socrates and three sophists or teachers of rhetoric. The debaters all agree that the public is incompetent to make reasoned decisions on justice and public policy. The

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question in dispute is whether the effective decision should be made by experts (Socrates) or by the manipulators of words (the sophists).

In familiar contemporary terms, the question might be stated as whether a court should appoint a panel of impartial authorities to decide whether the defendant's product caused the plaintiff's cancer, or whether the jury should be swayed by rival trial lawyers each touting their own experts. Much turns on whether we believe that the authorities are truly impartial, or whether they have interests of their own. When the National Academy of Sciences appoints a committee to advise the public on evolution, it consists of persons picked in part for their scientific outlook, which is to say their a priori acceptance of materialism. Members of such a panel know a lot of facts in their specific areas of research and have a lot to lose if the "fact of evolution" is exposed as a philosophical assumption. Should skeptics accept such persons as impartial fact-finders? Lewontin himself knows too much about cognitive elites to say anything so naive, and so in the end he gives up and concludes that "we" do not know how to get the public to the right starting point.

Lewontin is brilliantly insightful, but too crankily honest to be as good a manipulator as his Harvard colleague Stephen Jay Gould. Gould displays both his talent and his unscrupulousness in an essay in the March 1997 issue of *Natural History*, entitled "Nonoverlapping Magisteria" and subtitled "Science and religion are not in conflict, for their teachings occupy distinctly different domains." With a subtitle like that, you can be sure that Gould is out to reassure the public that evolution leads to no alarming conclusions. True to form, Gould insists that the only dissenters from evolution are "Protestant fundamentalists who believe that every word of the Bible must be literally true." Gould also insists that evolution (he never defines the word) is "both true and entirely compatible with Christian belief." Gould is familiar with nonliteralist opposition to evolutionary naturalism, but he blandly denies that any such phenomenon exists. He even quotes a letter written to the *New York Times* in answer to an op-ed essay by Michael Behe, without revealing the context. You can do things like that when you know that the media won't call you to account.

The centerpiece of Gould's essay is an analysis of the complete text of Pope John Paul's statement of October 22, 1996 to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences endorsing evolution as "more than a hypothesis." He fails to quote the Pope's crucial qualification that "theories of evolution which, in accordance with the philosophies inspiring them, consider the spirit as emerging from the forces of living matter or as a mere epiphenomenon of this matter, are incompatible with the truth about man." Of course, a theory based on materialism assumes by definition that there is no "spirit" active in this world that is independent of matter. Gould knows this perfectly well, and he also knows, just as Richard Lewontin does, that the evidence doesn't support the claims for the creative power of natural selection made by writers such as Richard Dawkins. That is why the philosophy that really supports the theory has to be protected from critical scrutiny.

Gould's essay is a tissue of half-truths aimed at putting the religious people to sleep, or luring them into a "dialogue" on terms set by the materialists. Thus Gould graciously allows religion to participate in discussions of morality or the meaning of life, because science does not claim authority over such questions of value, and because "Religion is too important to too many people for any dismissal or denigration of the comfort still sought by many folks from theology." Gould insists, however, that all such discussion must cede to science the power to determine the *facts*, and one of the facts is an evolutionary process that is every bit as materialistic and purposeless for Gould as it is for Lewontin or Dawkins. If religion wants to accept a dialogue on those terms, that's fine with Gould—but don't let those religious people think they get to make an independent judgment about the evidence that supposedly supports the "facts." And if the religious people are gullible enough to accept materialism as one of the facts, they won't be capable of causing much trouble.

The debate about creation and evolution is not deadlocked. Propagandists like Gould try to give the impression that nothing has changed, but essays like Lewontin's and books like Behe's demonstrate that honest thinkers on both sides are near agreement on a redefinition of the conflict. Biblical literalism is not the issue. The issue is whether materialism and rationality are the same thing. Darwinism is based on an a priori commitment to materialism, not on a philosophically neutral assessment of the evidence. Separate the philosophy from the science, and the proud tower collapses. When the public understands this clearly, Lewontin's Darwinism will start to move out of the science curriculum and into the department of intellectual history, where it can gather dust on the shelf next to Lewontin's Marxism. FT

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Love, Hate, and Jewish Identity

Jonathan Sacks

On its face, the subject of Judaism and Jewish identity should not count for much in the world. There are worldwide some 1.9 billion Christians and 800 million Muslims, as against a mere twelve million Jews. Throughout the Diaspora, Jews are a tiny minority surrounded by large non-Jewish cultures. In the Middle East, Israel is a tiny country surrounded by a vast constellation of Arab states. We are less than a quarter of a percent of the population of the world. In terms of numbers our influence should be minimal.

Yet I dare to say that Jews and Judaism are of interest and even influence in a way that cannot be accounted for in terms of numbers alone. No one put this better than the American writer Milton Himmelfarb, who said: "Each Jew knows how thoroughly ordinary he is; yet taken together we seem caught up in things great and inexplicable. . . . The number of Jews in the world is smaller than a small statistical error in the Chinese census. Yet we remain bigger than our numbers. Big things seem to happen around us and to us."

Let me begin my account, if not at the beginning of Jewish time, at least at the beginning of modern Jewish time: 1789, the year of the French Revolution and the birth of the modern secular nation-state. On August 26 the French National Assembly issued its Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, with its ringing opening assertion, "All men are born, and remain, free and equal in rights." The question was: Did that include Jews? Were Jews free? Were they equal? Were they citizens? Were they men?

The questions were real. At the very time of the Declaration anti-Jewish riots broke out in Alsace, the first and ominous indication that the secular nation-state might not end anti-Jewish sentiment, but merely secularize it into a new mode, to be given (in 1879) the name "anti-Semitism." Later in 1789, speaking in a debate on the eligibility of Jews for citizenship, the Count of Clermont-Tonnerre spelled out in a fateful sentence the terms on which Jews could be included in the new political dispensation. "The Jews," he said, "should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals." "It is intolerable," he continued, "that the Jews should become a separate political formation or class within the country. Every one of them must individually become a citizen; if they do not want this, they must inform us and we shall then be compelled to expel them."

Thus was born what eventually became known as *der Judenfrage*, the "Jewish question," whose relatively innocent formulation gave rise, in 1941, to the *Endlosung*, the Final Solution. The theory and terminology came from Germany. Some of the mythology, specifically the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, came from Russia. But it was in France, a century after the Revolution, that a Viennese journalist, Theodore Herzl, covering the Dreyfus trial, came to the conclusion that there was no future for the Jews in Europe and that the secular nation-state, far from ending anti-Semitism, had in fact given it a new and potentially terrible rebirth; and that there was no future for the Jewish people unless they constructed a nation-state of their own.

I go back to 1789 because contemporary discussions of Jewish life—issues like outmarriage, Jewish continuity, and Israel-Diaspora relations—often seem to me to lack depth because they lack a sense of historical background. And there is an historical reason for this, namely, that the world's two greatest Jewries, Israel and the American Jewish community, are themselves relatively recent phenomena. Until 1840, almost 90 percent of the Jewish world was to be found in Europe. Even more significantly, the Jews who made the journey to America or Israel did so

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precisely to forget Europe, to break away from its prejudices and disabilities, and to discover, or make, a new life in a new world. The strange contemporary blindness to Jewish history was born in a specific rebellion against Jewish history—a history that could be written in terms of wanderings and expulsions, inquisitions and pogroms, martyrdoms and exclusions, the powerlessness and homelessness of "the wandering Jew."

It is for this reason that we cannot understand where we are unless we first understand how we came to be here. Israel cannot be understood as simply a secular democratic state on the European model, or American Jewry as a typical version of American pluralism and denominationalism. These are part, but only part, of the Jewish story. The Israeli and American Jewish communities still carry within them the pains and tensions of the European Jewish experience, and even today they are shaped by what they were created to forget.

The modern Jewish experience was characterized by two phenomena. The first is that Jews were, to use John Murray Cuddihy's phrase, "latecomers to modernity." There was no long pre-history, such as occurred in Christian Europe, of Renaissance, Reformation, the Wars of Religion, and the birth of Enlightenment. Jews were thrust late into a complex set of challenges—the intellectual challenge of Enlightenment, the political challenge of Emancipation, and the social challenge of integration. What Jews believed, how they lived, and how they organized themselves came under sudden and concerted attack—sometimes in the name of progress, sometimes in the form of prejudice—and after centuries of exclusion from the mainstream of European culture they were radically unprepared for it. This alone would have constituted a crisis of massive proportions for the continuity of Jewish faith.

It was, nonetheless, the lesser of two crises. The other, whose significance it is impossible to overstate, was the double bind modernity itself placed on European Jews, giving rise to the phenomenon eventually termed "Jewish self-hatred." The results were summed up by Max Nordau in his speech to the First Zionist Congress. The "emancipated Jew in Western Europe," he said, "has abandoned his specifically Jewish character, yet the nations do not accept him as part of their national communities. He flees from his Jewish fellows, because anti-Semitism has taught him, too, to be contemptuous of them, but his Gentile compatriots repulse him as he attempts to associate with them. He has lost his home in the ghetto, yet the land of his birth is denied to him as his home." Much has changed since those words were spoken a hundred years ago, but we still live with their consequences.

The Enlightenment presented European Jews with a messianic promise and a demonic reality. The promise was a secular and rational order in which anti-Jewish prejudice would be overcome and Jewish civil disabilities abolished. The reality was that the more Jews became like everyone else, the more irrational and absolute became the prejudice against them: they were capitalists, they were communists, they were too provincial and parochial, they were too rootless and cosmopolitan, they kept to themselves, they got everywhere, they were disloyal, they were suspiciously over-loyal. The more assimilated they became, the more anti-Semitism grew.

The history of nineteenth-century Jewry is the tale of a dozen different attempts to find a way out of this trap from which there was no way out. The extreme response was a flight from Jewish identity through outmarriage, conversion to Christianity, or, wherever possible, the declaration that one was religionless. Among those who shrank from the conclusion that Jews could survive only by ceasing to be Jews, there was significant difference between Western and Eastern Europe. The Count of Clermont-Tonnerre had asked Jews to decide whether they were individuals or a nation—in other words, whether Judaism was a private religious confession or whether Jewry was essentially a collective entity, a people. Historically, of course, the answer was both; but the new European nation-state no longer permitted that reply.

In general, the Jews of Western Europe decided in favor of Judaism as religion-without-peoplehood, those of Eastern Europe in favor of Jewry as peoplehood-without-religion. Hence there emerged in the nineteenth century a set of entirely new constructions of Jewish identity: in the West, Reform and Conservative Judaism, in the East, the movements for Jewish culture and even political autonomy in the Pale of Settlement. As these failed in their aims of normalizing Jewish existence, there emerged perhaps the greatest revolution in modern Jewish life, the Zionist movement, less an ideology than a collection of conflicting ideologies, some secular, some religious, some political, some cultural, some attempting to restore ancient traditions, others determined to destroy them completely and build a totally new kind of Jew.

The First Zionist Congress took place in 1897. A century later, we inhabit a Jewish world in which in one sense everything has changed, and in another, nothing has changed. During the twentieth century, some of the most epic events in Jewish history have taken place: the Holocaust, the founding of the State of Israel, and the transfer of Jewish life from Europe to Israel and America. But the divisions in Jewish life today are almost exactly what they were a hundred years ago—between religious and secular, between Orthodoxy and Reform, and between those who see a Jewish future only in Israel and those who see a continuing role for the Diaspora. Between the first and the eighteenth centuries, with very few exceptions, a

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single Judaism prevailed—the Judaism of the Mishnah and Talmud that today we call Orthodoxy. In the twentieth century, there has been no new Judaism. Even the apparent exception, the Reconstructionism of Mordecai Kaplan, was only a translation into the American context of the earlier ideas of Ahad Ha-am. So the immense diversity of answers to the question "Who and what is a Jew?" all had their origin in a single century and continent: nineteenth-century Europe.

In 1897, Orthodox Jews believed that Reform would disappear: it was only a way-station on the road to total assimilation. Reform Jews believed that Orthodoxy would disappear: it was wholly incongruous with the modern world. Zionists believed the Diaspora would disappear: it was threatened equally by seduction and rape, assimilation and anti-Semitism. The non-Zionists believed that the hope of Jewish nationhood would disappear: the task of reviving an impulse buried for eighteen centuries was simply too great. We now know that every one of these predictions was wrong. Reform Judaism still exists. So does Orthodoxy. The state of Israel has been born. The Diaspora survives. Every option in Jewish life then exists today, and history has not yet delivered its verdict on any of them. The conflicts that, it was believed, would be resolved in the course of time have simply persisted and if anything grown in their intensity.

It is difficult to predict which of the conflicts will be the most damaging—between Israel and the Diaspora, between secular and religious Israelis, or between Orthodox and Reform Jews outside Israel. Each of these groups denies the other's definition of reality; and the possibilities of dialogue are severely limited. Each rift has the potential of dividing Jewry irreparably into two. Four years ago I published a book on Jewish unity entitled *One People?* Several friends in the United States wrote to me to say that it was a brave analysis but already too late. In America, in their view, Jews were no longer a single people. That has been the view of many Israelis about their own society for some time.

I am deeply concerned about these divisions, especially in Israel, for an obvious reason. The Jewish people has often been threatened by hostile civilizations, from ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century. But the most fateful injuries have been those the Jewish people has inflicted on itself: the division of the kingdom in the days of the First Temple, which brought about the eventual defeat of both halves and the loss of ten of the twelve tribes; and the internecine rivalry in the last days of the Second Temple, which brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and the longest exile in Jewish—indeed, in human—history.

There have been only three periods of Jewish sovereignty in four thousand years. Two ended in and because of internal dissension. The third age of sovereignty began in 1948, and already Israeli society is dangerously fragmented. Israelis themselves tend to downplay the danger, and even after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin there has been too little effort at the highest levels to bring secular and religious groups together into some mode of mutual understanding. I believe this is a grave mistake, and I have said so to successive Israeli Prime Ministers and Presidents. To survive, Israel must be not only a *medinah* but also a *chevrah*, not only a state but also a society. The democratic process alone does not guarantee the existence of the body politic; it needs in addition some minimal shared culture and identity. Israel at war is defined by its enemies. Israel in pursuit of peace is less easily defined, and more difficult to govern. That surely must be one concern for the future.

Beyond the question of Jewish unity there is another contemporary anxiety, namely, Jewish continuity. Jewish continuity is seen as a problem, first, in demographic terms. Jewish communities in the Diaspora are in decline, relative to Israel, relative to the larger societies of which they are a part, and even in absolute numbers. Continuity is seen, second, as a problem of outmarriage, most notably in the United States, where the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey showed that of young Jews who had married since 1985, 52 percent had been outmarriages where the non-Jewish spouse failed to convert. It is seen, third, as a problem specifically of the Diaspora, for the obvious reason that Israel has grown and outmarriage is not a significant problem in a country where Jews form a majority of the population. The problem is seen, fourth, in terms of the classic theory of the nation-state, whether in its American or Israeli version. The American version is called the "melting pot," for the United States is the place where immigrant communities inevitably assimilate. The Israeli version is called *shlilat hagolah*, negation of the Diaspora, which maintains that Jews can survive only within a predominantly Jewish society and culture.

I find these characterizations inadequate. The problem of Jewish continuity is not first and foremost demographic. There were times, most notably after the Spanish expulsion, when the Jewish population fell to one-sixth of what it is today, yet the same concerns were not expressed about the future survival of Jews and Judaism. Nor is it simply a problem of outmarriage. It is a problem also of non-marriage, late marriage, and low birthrates. Nor, as recent research by Charles Liebman and Steven M. Cohen has shown, is outmarriage evenly distributed within the Jewish community. Reanalyzing the data of the 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, and categorizing Jews as actively, moderately, loosely, or disengaged, they discovered that the outmarriage figures in these four sectors were as follows: among the

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actively engaged, 5 percent, among the moderately engaged, 10 percent, among the loosely engaged, 19 percent, among the disengaged, 49 percent. Outmarriage is thus only a symptom of the larger problem of disaffiliation.

More controversially, I would argue that the problem of continuity is global and affects Israel no less than the Diaspora. In the past few years, several surveys of young Israelis have shown an alarming lack of knowledge of and interest in the Jewish heritage. This has translated itself into a significant body of Israeli thought known as post-Zionism, which would see Israel not as a Jewish state but as *medinat kol ezrachehah*, a "state of all its citizens," requiring abandonment of the Law of Return, rewriting of the national anthem, and severing links, not only with Jews worldwide, but also with Israel's biblical past and Judaic culture. There is collective as well as individual assimilation; and what appears in the Diaspora in the form of outmarriage appears in Israel in the form of secularization.

If therefore the problem is global, it is not to be understood in terms of the dynamic of the nation-state. Jews in the Diaspora do not inevitably disappear. Even a moderate degree of religious observance or communal affiliation guards against outmarriage. And even a state in which the majority of inhabitants are Jews does not of itself ensure the continuity of Judaism. I therefore come back to my earlier analysis. The problem of Jewish continuity was born, not recently, but in the early days of the Jewish encounter with modernity. The most acute remark was made by Mordecai Kaplan in the opening sentence of his 1934 book *Judaism as a Civilization*: "Before the beginning of the nineteenth century all Jews regarded Judaism as a privilege; since then most Jews have come to regard it as a burden." I would put it more pointedly still. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Jews defined themselves as the people loved by God. Since then most Jews, wittingly or unwittingly, have defined themselves as the people hated by Gentiles. No burden, especially the burden of being hated, is something decent people want to see handed on to their children. That is why we have had so few Jewish children.

Consider the most salient definitions of Jewish identity today. In Israel, as expressed by writers such as Amos Oz, it consists in living in a secular democratic state guided by the principles of the Enlightenment. In the United States, in a famous survey conducted in Los Angeles in 1988, in answer to the question, which qualities do you consider most important to your Jewish identity, 59 percent replied "a commitment to social equality." A mere 17 percent chose "religious observance." Nothing could be more striking than the fact that a people whose very reason for being in the past was to be different, chosen, particular, should today define itself in purely universalist terms, forgetting—surely not accidentally—that it is precisely in our particularity that we enter and express the universal human condition. I am reminded of the remark of the late Shlomo Carlebach after a lifetime of visiting American campuses: "I ask students what they are. If someone gets up and says, I'm a Catholic, I know that's a Catholic. If someone says, I'm a Protestant, I know that's a Protestant. If someone gets up and says, I'm just a human being, I know that's a Jew."

The seminal Jewish experience for the past two centuries has been the flight from particularity, and both the Israeli and American Jewish communities are its heirs. Most Jews did not set themselves the self-conscious goal of ceasing to be Jews or ensuring that their children would not be Jews, whether through conversion or outmarriage or other forms of disaffiliation. But they set themselves two other goals, one more modest, the other more radical. The first was to be less conspicuous as Jews. Hence Sidney Morganbesser's wonderful definition of Jewish identity as *incognito ergo sum*. In the Diaspora that involved lowering the ritual content of Jewish life. In Israel it involved the pursuit of a new identity *kechol hagoyim*, "like all the nations." The second was to work for a world where religious differences no longer made a difference. Hence the essentially antireligious liberalism that runs like a thread through Jewish intellectual life from Spinoza to Amos Oz and Alan Dershowitz.

What is remarkable about both the Israeli and American Jewish communities is that in both countries Jews are markedly more secular than their Christian or Muslim neighbors. For four thousand years Jews were a people in search of God. Today Jews, more than any other group in the Western world, are a people trying to escape from God. Given the pain and tragedy of Jewish life for the past two centuries, indeed the past two millennia, that is not surprising. But it suggests that the crisis of Jewish continuity is due not to the failure, but precisely to the success, of Jewish strategies. As the Talmud records of a much earlier crisis in Jewish life, during the Hadrianic persecutions, "By rights we should issue a decree not to get married and have children, and let the seed of Abraham come to an end of its own accord." What Jewry faces today is a failure of the will that sustained our ancestors across the generations: the willingness to be human by being different and thus testifying to the dignity of difference.

What is likely to be the outcome? I don't know. There is a difference between prediction and prophecy, just as there is a difference between optimism and hope. Certainly in the immediate future the Diaspora will decline in numbers. In Israel and America, Orthodoxy will grow. Other groups will feel threatened by this growth, and there may be angry confrontations. Israel's dependence on financial and political support from the Diaspora will diminish,

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but it is already minimal, and rightly so, because no sovereign state should have its domestic policies determined by those who do not live there. It may well be that Israel and the Diaspora will drift apart politically. That will worry those who see the relationship as primarily political. It will give less concern to those who do not.

Speaking personally, though I am not an optimist, I am nonetheless full of hope. I see a new generation of Jews emerging, for the first time in many generations, with an undamaged, uncomplicated sense of Jewish identity. They recognize Judaism's spiritual power and moral grandeur. They are searching for personal meaning, moral guidance, and stability and structure in their lives. They have been touched by the outreach movements, and they are beginning to reconnect with Jewish observance and *talmud Torah,* the study of Jewish texts. Almost every adult education program we run in Britain is today oversubscribed, and there is a huge demand for new Jewish day schools.

This new generation, though personally committed to Orthodoxy, is far less interested in waging war with Reform—it is more secure, less easily threatened, more interested in opening the source of Judaism to everyone than in building defensive walls. At long last it has moved beyond the vicarious sources of Jewish identity—anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and support for Israel—toward a genuine personal encounter with the elements of Judaism that made it a source of inspiration for a hundred generations: its love of family, community, education, and philanthropy, its way of translating abstract ideals into simple daily practices: *kashrut, Shabbat,* the sanctity of family life, the choreography of *kedushah,* of Jewish holiness and difference.

Demographically, Diaspora communities will continue to decline for a while, but they will reach a plateau and then begin to grow again. We know from all recent research that the single greatest influence on whether we will have Jewish grandchildren is religious observance in the home: our British data suggest that this outweighs any other influence by a factor of at least five to one. Even a simple act like lighting candles on Friday evening makes a difference. There is a core of committed Jews in all major Diaspora Jewries, and they will not decline in numbers. The Diaspora is not about to disappear.

The Jewish community in the United States, however, may have to rethink its approach to politics. The American Jewish community is unusual in that it has predicated its influence, whether on Washington or Israel, on demographic and financial power. Politically it has acted as a pressure group. The European Jewish model was quite different. It used the instrumentalities of *shtadlanut,* personal relationships and informal influence, neither of which depends on the numerical size of the community. American Jews may have to relearn this style.

The American Jewish community will continue to have an influence on Israel in the way it has in the past, which is not always the way it thinks it has. Its real contribution has not been money, or the sway it has exercised over American foreign policy, but the people who have gone to live there. Two of the most significant developments in Judaism this century—the *Hesder yeshivot* and the *Ba'al Teshuvah yeshivot* (religious seminaries for those who serve in Israel's armed forces, and those who are returning to tradition)—have largely been led by American rabbis who live and work in Israel.

What all of us will have to relearn is the fundamental truth with which I began. Jewish influence has never been predicated on numbers. In the last year of his life Moses told the Israelites, "God did not set His love on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples." (Deuteronomy 7:7) Jews have had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers because of their loyalty to God, their commitment to a morally ordered society built on justice and compassion, and their courage in being true to their heritage while enhancing the lives of others. That, said Moses, was our "wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations." It still is.

The idea that nearly destroyed us as a faith in the nineteenth century was that Jews could solve the problem of anti-Semitism. The truth is that only anti-Semites can solve the problem of anti-Semitism. We can be vigilant against it; but we must never internalize it and let it affect our self-identity. It is time for us to stop defining ourselves as the people hated by Gentiles. Perhaps it is even time for us to reestablish our dialogue with God.

The Holocaust and the birth of Israel, the two most significant Jewish events of the twentieth century, both had their origins in a single concept—the nation-state. It was the nation-state that gave rise to the "Jewish question," and it was the nation-state that gave rise to the most powerful Jewish answer, namely, that Jews must have a state of their own. There is every indication that the twenty-first century, with its worldwide communications, multinational corporations, and international lobbies, will be one in which identities will no longer be defined by the nation-state. They will be both more local and more global—built around communities on the one hand, international communication on the other. Historically that is what the Jewish people has always been: a global people built around strong local communities. The Israel-Diaspora relationship will be transformed by this change. If the focus of the twentieth century was the Jewish state, in the twenty-first century it will be the Jewish people.

Just as Jews were latecomers to modernity, so we have been latecomers to postmodernity. Alone among the faith communities of the world, Jews welcomed secularization. It seemed to promise an end to religion, and therefore to religious persecu-

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tion. In a sense it did—but persecution persisted, only now without the restraints of religion. Jews have been living for some time in a condition of ambivalence and trauma, ambivalence about themselves, trauma about their relationship with the world. But time heals. And the Jewish people has never failed to recover from catastrophe. We are an ancient people, twice as old as Christianity, three times as old as Islam. And if history teaches us anything it is this, that Judaism survives not by numbers but by the quality and strength of Jewish faith. We always were an obstinate people, too obstinate to let go of God, too obstinate to be defeated by history. FT

Catching My Grandson

Oh, look, old Galileo whispered, *look, we move.*
And burning, burning in the sky, the sun stood still.
Earth turned and spun and whirled about the ball,
but no one else believed. Not then. *Take time,*

my father called, watching our first adopted toddler fall,
push up and waddle to my lap. *It goes so fast.*
Yeah, yeah, I thought, patting my daughter's goldilocks,
thumbing her tears away. I loved that chubby cherub

with the grapejuice grin, took turns changing Pampers,
scrubbing that kid in bubble baths, giving time
and horsey rides, a thousand tasks each day before I slept.
I accuse myself, I confess I doubted my old man.

What passes fast, I thought, was time enough to do
what must be done—another flight, reports overdue,
the grass I had to cut. The earth does turn,
no, spins. I crouch now, catching my grandson

firing the ball, the red seams spinning.
He's older than his mother was that night
my father called, when my knees could duckwalk a mile,
my shoulders and biceps bulged. *Ouch,* I mutter, now,

a pain each time I lob the baseball back,
my right arm stiff, old shoulder bony,
the hard ball wobbling, plopping in his glove.
And now he burns it hard, curve ball inside

I have to dive for, falling again for physics
faster than reflex, and I'm laughing on the ground,
hugging the ball, my grandson laughing,
staggering off the mound, pounding his glove.

Walt McDonald

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Atrocities Not Fit to Print

Nina Shea

Since January 1996, when a coalition of Christian and Jewish activists began working to publicize in America the plight of persecuted Christians abroad, there has appeared in the secular press a great deal of commentary about the arrest, torture, and execution of believers. Columnists in particular have seized upon the issue, with the *New York Times*' A. M. Rosenthal alone writing over a dozen columns arguing passionately in defense of besieged Christians. The major Washington, D.C., news bureaus have also begun to cover the story regularly, as public agitation in the U.S. makes international religious oppression a hot topic in political Washington's foreign policy debates.

But perhaps the most interesting feature of the media's response to the persecution of believers is how little work on the story (according to the online information services First Search and Nexis) has come from the international reporters and foreign correspondents actually covering the countries where that persecution occurs. While editorial page editors—in such major newspapers as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*—fill their pages with columns, op-eds, and letters about the persecution of Christians abroad, the foreign desks of those same newspapers are nearly mute.

Take the situation in China, where government officials have undertaken in the last year a massive and deliberate crackdown on unregistered Catholic and Protestant churches. As a report issued by the U.S. State Department this July declared:

> They raided and closed several hundred "house church" groups, many with significant memberships, properties, and financial resources. Local authorities used threats, demolition of property, extortion of "fines," interrogation, detention, and reform-through-education sentences in carrying out this campaign. Some leaders of such groups were detained for lengthy investigation, and some were beaten. There were reports that unofficial groups were particularly hard hit in Beijing and the nearby provinces of Henan (where there are rapidly growing numbers of Protestants) and Hebei, a center of unregistered Catholics. At present, four Catholic underground bishops are among the many Christians who remain imprisoned or detained, or whose whereabouts are unknown.

On a fact-finding mission to China this summer, a Freedom House delegation observed the government's aggressive campaign to eradicate the underground Christian churches that form—thanks to China's successful suppression of independent labor unions, newspapers, and human rights groups—the only nationwide nongovernment institutions existing even clandestinely in China today. With hundreds of house churches demolished or shut, their pastors sent to labor camps to be beaten and tortured, and several Catholic bishops behind bars, the Chinese government has systematically set out to crush this affront to its power—waging a battle that affects millions of underground Chinese Christians.

During the year of this crackdown, not a week has passed that the topic of China has not appeared in the U.S. press. Over a thousand articles mentioning the country were published in the last twelve months in the four major American daily newspapers. China's economic development, environmental problems, internal politics, take-over of Hong Kong, foreign relations, and military build-up were all given ample coverage. But the year-long siege of China's underground Christian communities

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received little or no foreign news coverage in the four major national papers.

As of October, the *Washington Post* has not published in 1997 a single story on the persecution in China (making only a passing reference in a June 26 article on Hong Kong). The *New York Times* has published only two. The *Times'* first story, "Catholics in China: Back to the Underground," run on January 26, gave a helpful account of the Catholic situation but made no mention of the situation of the house-church Protestant evangelicals, now thought to number between twenty and fifty million. On April 3, the *Times*, running a narrow report from the Associated Press wire, carried its second piece on religious persecution in China—entitled "China Said to Raid Home of Catholic Priest" and again concerned exclusively with Catholics. Now over a year old, the last story the *Washington Post* ran about China's Christians appeared on October 6, 1996, entitled "China Has More Catholics, More Repression"; like the *Times'* stories, it omitted reference to the plight of evangelicals. (Television news coverage has been somewhat better, with both Dan Rather on CBS and Peter Jennings on ABC airing segments on China's persecuted evangelicals and Catholics.)

When on June 26 the *Wall Street Journal* at last reported on the Christian situation in China, it carried perhaps the most distorted essay of any that appeared in the major press. Uncritically accepting Beijing's assertion that China's Communist Party leaders "are showing increasing tolerance for a religious revival now sweeping China"—the main message of Religious Bureau Chief and Communist hardliner Ye Xiaowen during his visit to the United States in July—the *Journal* article was rife with inaccuracies and misleading statements that minimized the persecution. Inaccurately reporting that two leading Protestants jailed in March had been released, the article pointed to the expansion of the YMCA as evidence of religious tolerance—not mentioning that the YMCA has operated in China as a propaganda tool for the Communists since before the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, a former director wrote a Communist tract (entitled "How to Hold a Successful Accusation Meeting") explaining to the Party cadres that "big accusation meetings constitute a most effective means of helping the masses of believers to comprehend the evil wrought in China by imperialism, to recognize the fact that imperialism has utilized Christianity to attack China, and to wipe out imperialist influences within the church."

Sudan provides another example of the foreign desks of America's national press turning a blind eye to the story happening on their own beats. Islamic fundamentalists declared Sudan an Islamic state in 1983, and government attempts to apply Shari'a (Islamic law) to its sizable non-Muslim population was one of the key factors leading to civil war. The militant Islamic government's tactics in its religious war in the southern part of the country have resulted in the deaths of about 1.5 million people and the displacement of more than three million. To eradicate the non-Muslim population, Sudanese agents have burned and looted villages, enslaved women and children, forcibly converted non-Muslim boys before using them as shock troops in battle, relocated entire villages into concentration camps called "peace villages," and withheld international food aid to starving non-Muslim communities until they convert. The U.S. State Department, the United Nations Human Rights Commission, and numerous independent human rights investigators have all documented that Christians and animists are victims of an ongoing brutal campaign of forced Islamization sponsored by the Khartoum government.

In the past year, however, not a single story on Sudanese religious persecution has appeared from the foreign desks of the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, or *USA Today*. Charles Jacobs, Research Director of the American Anti-Slavery Group that has been documenting the enslavement of black Christians in Sudan for four years, expresses the bewilderment of all who have worked to inform the world about this situation: "Where are American reporters? We have the names of children kidnaped into slavery. We know their villages, parents, and stories. Their plights are newsworthy."

A great many other examples exist in the century that David Barrett has painstakingly demonstrated to be the worst century of anti-Christian persecution in history, with Christians the most persecuted religious group on earth today. Already 1997 has proved for Egypt's Christians to be the worst year in decades. The Copts, practicing their faith in Egypt since the first century A.D., form the largest population of Christians in the Middle East. But earlier this year, Copt villages in Upper Egypt were attacked by Islamic militants, leaving some thirty dead. According to local human rights groups, Egyptian authorities had first withdrawn police protection from the besieged Coptic villages and then failed to prosecute and convict anyone for the murders, despite the fact that some of the gunmen were identified. The *Washington Post* did report the assaults on March 18 in a piece appropriately entitled "Egypt's Endangered Christians," while the *New York Times* carried the story on March 15. But the foreign desks of the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* ignored the massacres and their larger significance for the continued existence of Christian communities in the Middle East—communities that have long been under serious assault. According to Vatican sources, since the early part of this century the number of Christians in Iraq has decreased from 35 to 5 percent of the population; in Iran, from 15 to 2 percent; in Syria, from 40 to 10 percent; and in Turkey, from 32 to 0.2 percent.

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A violent rampage of thirty thousand Muslims against a Christian area of Punjab in Pakistan in February—sparked by a rumor of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (a capital offense in Pakistan)—left thousands of Christians homeless and caused $25 million in damages. When Pakistani Christians marched on the capital a few days later to protest the destruction and demand greater protection, they were brutalized and arrested by police, though the leaders of the original rampage remain at large. But these developments went unreported in America's major newspapers.

So too the story of Vietnam's repression of Christians over the past year—including the ordeal of an American woman who was put under house arrest for two months after she ran afoul of that country's religious restrictions while visiting her Vietnamese family—has also been ignored by the major foreign news desks. And so too has persecution in Saudi Arabia, which allows no non-Muslim religious expression and prosecutes those Christians, mostly foreign workers, who attempt to pray secretly: two Filipino Catholics were beheaded in Riyadh last May.

Some excuse for America's media lies in the difficulty of reporting on underground and marginalized communities in situations of persecution. *New York Times* correspondent Patrick Tyler revealed in his January 26 article that both he and a colleague from the *Washington Post* had been detained while investigating the crackdown on Catholics in different parts of China—and even under normal circumstances, foreign reporters in China have their offices and phones tapped and their movements monitored, with the threat of expulsion ready if they are too critical too often. A place like Sudan presents other problems because of its remoteness and the dangers posed by war and disease.

But these practical difficulties are surmountable. Such major wire services as the Associated Press and Reuters, which exist to supplement news reporting for the media, have done for the most part a fair job supplying information on anti-Christian atrocities. Religious and human rights groups monitoring persecution—Freedom House, Christian Solidarity International, Voice of the Martyrs, the Cardinal Kung Foundation, Christian Concern International, the *China News and Church Report*, and the Christian news service *Compass Direct*—undertake investigations that could themselves be the subject of mainstream reporting, much as the *New York Times* and other papers frequently covered reports on Central America from human rights groups during the 1980s.

Even original reporting is possible, given the will, as was demonstrated last year when the relatively small *Baltimore Sun* ran a three-part series on the slave trade in Sudan after two of its journalists, with the help of Christian Solidarity International, went to Sudan and personally bought Christian slaves. The *Boston Phoenix* also sent a reporter to Sudan to cover firsthand the slave revelations, while *ABC Dateline* brought cameras in to document the slave markets of Sudan.

Certainly other foreign stories are filed in America's major newspapers despite reporting difficulties. The *New York Times* managed to get its reporters out to survey battles on the Sudan-Uganda border in the past year. The resulting article, "Christian Rebels Wage a War of Terror in Uganda," which ran on the front page on March 5, may indicate something about the view of Christians held by America's foreign reporters and help explain why persecution of Christians has gone unreported. Recounting ghastly acts of violence by a group calling itself the "Lord's Resistance Army" and describing them as "Christian fundamentalist rebels," the article relates how they "embrace an eclectic group of beliefs"—"prohibiting the riding of bicycles, killing of pigs, and eating of white-feathered chickens"—and punish violators with amputation. Given that the organization is wildly heretical, lacks any known links to an established denomination, and is funded by the Islamic government of Sudan, the description of the Lord's Resistance Army as "fundamentalist" and "Christian" is absurd.

It may be at last a simple lack of understanding and interest, rather than logistical difficulties, that keeps foreign correspondents off the story of persecuted Christians. Though the topic sparks obvious interest in huge segments of the American public, the national press corps has a reputation within Christian circles for being irreligious or even anti-religious. And it is at least true—as a number of studies have documented—that journalists are less likely to be practicing believers of any religion than the general public.

Anecdotal evidence points in the same direction. In many conversations over the years, I have often been struck by how confused and ill-informed many journalists are on religious issues. A foreign editor at one major magazine, while acknowledging that the campaign to publicize the plight of persecuted Christians has importance as part of the political debate in Washington, indicated that he considered the campaign itself as mainly a strategy for repressing the culture of Third World—an attempt to force Muslim countries to allow proselytizing by American Christian missionaries. Though Middle East Bureau Chief for his magazine and aware of Egypt's six million Copts, he was barely conscious of the persecutions they suffered, just as he did not seem to know of Pakistan's large indigenous Christian community and the violence it endures under that country's draconian blasphemy laws. Like other journalists I have spoken to, he labored under the prejudice that Christianity is a white man's religion and a tool

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of Western imperialism. (Three-fourths of world Christians today live in the Third World.) Another journalist from the mainstream press told me he thinks it inherently "bigoted" to report on anti-Christian persecution in particular. It is a mindset described by the Reverend Keith Roderick, director of the Illinois-based Coalition for the Defense of Human Rights Under Islam, who observes, "There is a subtle form of bigotry that inhibits a more thorough reporting of the persecution of Christians. It is quite difficult for many journalists to accept that Christians are the victims rather than the victimizers. Christianity is the last religion that can be picked on with impunity."

When the State Department released its report on anti-Christian persecution last summer, one important journalist expressed his concern that government involvement in the protest against the persecution of Christians may violate the constitutional principle of separation of church and state. And I found myself wondering whose constitutional rights would be violated. The foreign dictators? The foreign religious groups suffering enormous persecution? The objection seems to surface only when the persecuted are Christians—and was missing when the U.S. imposed trade sanctions on the Soviet Union because of persecution against the Jews, sent peacekeeping troops into Bosnia on behalf of Muslims, and registered a diplomatic demarche on behalf of Scientologists in Germany. And in fact, hardly anyone imagines that a foreign policy protecting the universal human rights of religious believers is the same as an unconstitutional promotion of religious beliefs. That important journalist's raising of the issue is instructive, however, in exposing the mainstream media's wariness about religious freedom as a legitimate human rights concern.

Similarly, other journalists expressed concerns—echoing a line sometimes put forward by the Beijing authorities—that Christian worship uncontrolled by a government is likely to produce dangerous cults like the Aum Shinri Kyo, who released poison gas in a Tokyo subway. The tone of the journalists as they argued this issue suggests an underlying fear that evangelicals and Catholics, especially those so committed that they would be willing to suffer persecution and death for their faith, are dangerous fanatics—though they readily acknowledge the heroism of political dissidents who risk the same fates. When another mainstream journalist took note of the huge grassroots lobby forming within American Christian communities to press the Administration to stand up for religious freedom abroad, she admitted to me that she had sympathy for the point of view that it was "dangerous for foreign policy" to involve "people who know nothing about the world." But she acknowledged that she had no similar qualms about the anti-apartheid campaign of the 1980s.

There are certain hopeful signs that the campaign to publicize the international persecution of Christians has begun to succeed. Representative Frank Wolf and Senator Arlen Specter have put forward the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act that has a good chance of passage, and the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, scheduled for November 16, has captured the attention of a growing number of America's churches. But coverage of the issue of religious persecution by the mainstream prestige press remains important. It provides critical information to the public and to policymakers, and it sets a standard for smaller media outlets. Moreover, it sends a message to foreign despotisms—whose embassies scour these papers—that America cares. The foreign desks of America's major newspapers must abandon their prejudices and end the self-censorship of reporting on history's worst century of the persecution of Christians. FT

Distinction

Psalm 143

I can't cry innocent in any court:
Dogged by enemies, I ran, was caught.
Pitched in a hole, my soul turned waste,
Heart hollow rock not even wind might whistle through.
Did darkness when the universe was torn from you
Into its being, long for nothing?

Hurry. Faces of the long departed, dim and empty
Peer up from the pit. I said, "The sun will rise tomorrow.
I will see it." Will I? Keep me and my spirits spinning
Level at the rim until the hateful clatter echoless
Down their appointed slot. Then keep me longer:
No good likeness when I am not.

Laurance Wieder

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Recovering Christendom

Gilbert Meilaender

THE DESIRE OF THE NATIONS: REDISCOVERING THE ROOTS OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY. By OLIVER O'DONOVAN. *Cambridge University Press. 304 pp. $68.50.*

Granting, of course, that there are countless books I have not read, and with apologies in particular to the friends whose books I have read, *The Desire of the Nations* is as significant a work of theology as I can recall reading in the last twenty years. It is also, alas, a very difficult (and very expensive) book.

In the Preface to the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason,* Kant noted that his work, even when set forth in "purely *scholastic* fashion," was already quite large. He therefore deemed it "inadvisable to enlarge it yet further through examples and illustrations. These are necessary only from a *popular* point of view; and this work can never be made suitable for popular consumption. Such assistance is not required by genuine students of the science."

I recalled this passage as I worked my way through *The Desire of the Nations,* more than once wondering whether to number myself among the "genuine students of the science" or among those in need of more "assistance." O'Donovan's style is dense, elliptical, architectonic—but also enormously learned in ways one hardly ever encounters in contemporary theological writing. Many books are worth reading; this book is important.

What makes it important? Chiefly, I believe, two things. The book is, first, a reading of Scripture as a coherent whole and continuous narrative. This reading is genuinely historical in the sense that it makes place for change and development within the biblical narrative. It is very far removed from any ahistorical proof-texting; yet the entire story is told from the standpoint of the Church's witness to the resurrection of Jesus. It is the story of God's triumph in Christ, the desire of the nations. And second, the book is a powerful defense of Christendom—not as a present reality, of course, since O'Donovan knows that we no longer live in such times, but as a necessary feature of the Church's mission.

Complicated as the book is, it is nevertheless carefully plotted. In this review I will try, first, briefly to place the book in terms of some contemporary theological concerns—and in terms of Augustine and Barth, on both of whom O'Donovan draws heavily. Second, and at much greater length, I aim to summarize the argument of the book—tracing its account of political rule from ancient Israel, through the revelation of the kingdom of God in Jesus and the rule of the exalted Christ in the Church, to the Church's mission which anticipates the obedience of political authorities and the transformation of societies. And third, I will step back and ask what, if anything, the argument lacks. In particular, I will ponder the fact that it makes power, rather than love, the central theme of biblical narrative.

If we try to locate O'Donovan's project theologically, we might first recall his description of Barth's political theology as a "magnificent, but incomplete, beckoning movement." Barth, of course, came at political questions from a variety of perspectives at different points in his life, but O'Donovan notes in particular the never-completed volume IV/4 of the *Church Dogmatics,* in which Barth approached politics "solely from the point of view of the Church's mission." It would not be entirely mistaken to read *The Desire of the Nations* as the completion of that project. It is not only that, however, for it is also a *City of God* for our time, an account of the history of that city of which glorious things are spoken. And O'Donovan calls Barth and Augustine unmistakably to mind when—in a passage that I shall come around to questioning—he writes that "no destiny can possi-

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bly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, other than that of a city."

Although I will not be able to do O'Donovan's discussion justice, I intend to summarize it at length, if only in order to encourage other readers to enter into it themselves and probe its complexities. Hans Frei once described Barth's theological writing as having the "peculiar character of being at once accessible and yet so difficult to do justice to in exposition and commentary." Something similar is true of *The Desire of the Nations*, and Frei's description of Barth's project is not a bad description of what O'Donovan is doing:

> Barth was about the business of conceptual description: He took the classical themes of communal Christian language molded by the Bible, tradition, and constant usage in worship, practice, instruction, and controversy, and he restated or redescribed them, rather than evolving arguments on their behalf. It was of the utmost importance to him that this communal language . . . had an integrity of its own: It was irreducible. But in that case its lengthy, even leisurely unfolding was equally indispensable. For he was restating or reusing a language that had once been accustomed talk, both in first-order use in ordinary or real life, and in second-order technical theological reflection, but had now for a long time, perhaps more than 250 years, been receding from natural familiarity, certainly in theological discourse. So Barth had as it were to recreate a universe of discourse, and he had to put the reader in the middle of that world, instructing him in the use of that language by showing him how.

The first task of political theology is to give an account of what we mean by political authority or rule (the *esse* of politics)—the notion of a political act. A further task will be to unfold the *bene esse* of politics, the proper use of political action. O'Donovan's description of political authority begins with the vocabulary used in the Bible to describe the reign of Yahweh over Israel. The political tradition of Israel—read as a history that develops over time, in which each development "has to be weighed and interpreted in the light of what preceded and what followed it"—is normative, and its character can be roughly summarized in four affirmations.

The Lord's reign is, first, an exercise of power that gives Israel victory or salvation; it is, second, the execution of judgment or justice within Israel; and it is, third, the establishment of Israel's communal identity as a people existing over time (an identity connected at first with the land and, later, with possession of the law). These three affirmations summarize what it means to say that the Lord rules as king in Israel, and, if the features that constitute Israel as a people are normative, what it means to speak of any political authority.

These three—power, execution of right, and perpetuation of communal identity—constitute Yahweh's rule in Israel, but to them a fourth affirmation must be added. The Lord's rule is acknowledged—though not established—in the praise Israel, as a worshiping community, offers. "Shall we conclude, then, that within every political society there occurs, implicitly, an act of worship of divine rule? I think we may even venture as far as that." This may strike a contemporary reader as bizarre, but it helps us understand why idolatry always lies near at hand in politics when the divine authority that establishes government is ignored or forgotten. At any rate, we do not create political authority; we acknowledge it and thereby acknowledge our existence as a political community. "The doctrine that *we* set up political authority, as a device to secure our own essentially private, local, and unpolitical purposes, has left the Western democracies in a state of pervasive moral debilitation, which, from time to time, inevitably throws up idolatrous and authoritarian reactions." Here we see O'Donovan at his most antiliberal, attacking (on the basis of Israel's normative tradition) the idea that government exists chiefly to foster the pursuit of private aims and interests. That tendency in his thought will, however, be sharply qualified before he is finished.

The story of Israel does not end with the establishment of Yahweh's rule through power, judgment, and establishment of communal identity. This rule must now be mediated to the people, and the nature of that mediation changes over time. Moses is himself a unitary mediator—carrying out all three functions as military deliverer, judge, and one who in the law gives the pattern of communal life. Kings in Israel also claimed to exercise all three functions in an undivided sovereignty that provided a unitary representation of God's rule. Such an arrangement, always controversial in Israel, was a constant temptation to make more of the monarch than he was, to see in the king an image of Israel's God.

To avoid such danger Israel turned not to a notion of "separation of powers" (which notion cannot therefore be quite as politically essential as we sometimes suppose) but, instead, to prophets. The law of the Lord had an independent voice within Israelite society through the prophets, and, thus, every political authority must understand that it is not the sole mediator of divine authority, that it is itself subject to the community's own independent witness to God's will (which witness could, for example, take the form of a theory of "natural law" that transcends and judges positive law). This independent witness may even become, as it did later in Israel's history when the mediating institutions of government had collapsed, the voice of a single individual (such as Jeremiah) that preserves the community's memory of its

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own identity and reaches out toward its reconstitution.

This depiction of political rule, drawn from the history of Israel, can also be applied to other nations, for Israel's God was not locally confined. "Out of the self-possession of this people in their relation to God springs the possibility of other peoples' possessing themselves in God." To put the point a little differently, but in a way whose relevance to continuing disputes in the Middle East may be apparent, the God who providentially elects Israel as his chosen people is ready to protect the communal identity of other peoples as well. What Israel's tradition does not authorize, however, is any single *mediator* of divine rule at the international level. There is no single world order or empire. Yahweh's world is "plurally constituted." He could make his name known to the nations through Israel, and his law could bind the nations universally, but there is no universal mediator of his rule. Hence, in relations among nations the rule of law can be invoked but not the commanding rule of a single government.

> This says something about the limits of our collective identities. To be a human being at all is to participate in one or more collective identities. But there is no collective identity so overarching and all-encompassing that no human beings are left outside it. In that sense it is true that to speak of "humanity" is to speak of an abstraction. Only in that sense, for in fact "humanity" has a perfectly conceivable referent, and we should not hesitate to say that "humanity" is real. But it is not a reality that we can command politically. We do not meet it in any community, however great, of which we could assume the leadership. We meet it only in the face of Christ, who presents himself as our leader and commander.

With this essence of political authority as drawn from the history of Yahweh's reign in Israel, O'Donovan can turn to the *bene esse*, the proper use of political action. To describe that, we must sketch the manner in which the rule of God, established in Israel's communal existence, is brought to its completion in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Only then will we have an evangelical political theology.

The same categories that emerge from an examination of God's rule in Israel can be used to set forth the revelation of the kingdom of God in Jesus. He does mighty works of power that bring salvation; he proclaims the judgment of Israel; he reforms the understanding of the law upon which the identity of a restored Israel is based. The praise that acknowledges God's rule corresponds now to faith that recognizes the reign of God in Jesus. Much that passes for political theology (what O'Donovan terms "Jesuology") might stop here, focusing on Jesus' announcement of the dawning of a new age of liberation. Such an approach "could encourage hope for new acts of divine creativity. But it could not speak meaningfully of the defeat of Jesus' program, nor of its vindication." A better political theology "must base itself on 'the hidden counsel of God' which worked also through Caiaphas and Pilate." It must, that is, be grounded not in "Jesuology" but in Christology. The starting point for this Christology is the classical "two natures" teaching, which captures well the manner in which Jesus fills the two roles we have seen within Israel's story—the mediator of God's rule, and the representative individual who carries the identity of the people and reaches out toward its reconstitution.

O'Donovan traces the chief "moments" of the Christ-event in a fourfold pattern that coheres with the account of political rule derived from Israel's history. These moments are (1) the advent of Christ to save; (2) the passion of Christ in which the judgment of the world is given; (3) the restoration of Christ, which affirms Israel's new identity in its representative; and (4) the exaltation of Christ, the coronation of the one who has triumphed over the powers that oppose God's rule.

Present in his absence until the Parousia, the exalted Christ rules in the Church, whose life participates in the four moments of the Christ-event. Marked by the sign of baptism, the Church now gathers to herself those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Marked by the sign of the Eucharist, the Church now suffers—paradigmatically in her martyrs, but in countless other ways as well. Marked by the sign of her keeping of the Lord's day as a little Easter, the Church now rejoices in the restoration of the creation. Marked by the sign of the laying on of hands, the Church now speaks God's word in prophecy and prayer (which is speech addressed to the God from whom it comes). The churches have often been tempted to understand themselves in terms of one of these "moments" alone—as marked by mission alone, by suffering alone, by triumph alone, or by social responsibility alone. But such truncated understandings cannot recapitulate the narrative coherence of the moments in the story of Christ.

The salvation that Christ brings always remains political in nature. To be sure, the *inward* obedience of faith is given a new and striking centrality, as St. Paul makes clear, but Paul also testifies to the necessity of the continuing existence of Israel (with its public, political tradition). Israel too, of course, must take account of what has happened in the Christ. As it once had moved from conceiving its identity in terms of possession of the land to conceiving it in terms of possession of the law, so now it is called to see that possession of the law as fullfilled in Christ. But that does not nullify the continuing importance of its normative political tradition. "So

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until the last reconciliation the two communities must coexist, the one with the witness of its public institutions, the other with a witness founded on and attesting faith." The structure of public, political life remains an important concern even in the age of the Church.

Indeed, the exalted Christ rules not only in the Church but also in political life. After all, the powers have been disarmed by Christ, who has triumphed over them and who is the desire of the nations. Of course, that triumph remains hidden until the end of the age. Hence, we must both assert the rule of Christ and simultaneously acknowledge that it is not yet fully apparent. "Within the framework of those two assertions there opens up an account of secular authority which presumes neither that the Christ-event never occurred nor that the sovereignty of Christ is now transparent and uncontested." It is fair to say, however, that O'Donovan's discussion emphasizes the disarming and the rule more than the eschatological reservation and the hiddenness.

How, in fact, should political authority survive at all as a bearer of collective identity once membership in the Church has emerged as the new center of identity? To be sure, power and communal identity remain aspects of any account of the *esse* of political authority, but the "desacralization" of politics by the Christ-event provides a new understanding of the *bene esse*—the proper use of political action. (It also provides a setting in which the powers of this world might attempt one last desperate act of self-assertion—might, that is, become the Antichrist.) The point of politics must be rethought, for it exists now to serve the advancement of the Gospel. It exists, that is, chiefly to provide the execution of right, the just judgment that preserves the social order toward the further spread of the Christian mission. "The accumulation of power and the maintenance of community identity cease to be self-evident goods; they have to be justified at every point by their contribution to the judicial function. The responsible state is therefore minimally coercive and minimally representative." This should make clear that, whatever the other tendencies in O'Donovan's thought, he holds that the political doctrine arising from the desacralization of politics can, broadly speaking, be characterized as the classical tradition of political liberalism.

In the time and space provided by secular government the Church is in mission, securing the identity of Israel on the one hand, securing for the sake of Israel the obedience of the Gentile nations on the other—until the day when Yahweh gathers both Israel and the nations and Christ delivers the kingdom to his Father. "Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising," the prophet says, articulating thereby the twofold focus of the Church's mission: to society and to political authorities. The aim of the mission is different in the two cases. Society must be transformed only in accord with the purposes of God revealed in Christ. Rulers must disappear, relinquishing their sovereignty now that the stronger one has appeared.

O'Donovan takes up "the obedience of the rulers" in chapter six, perhaps the richest chapter in the book, containing his treatment (and, in some respects, defense) of the idea of Christendom—that is, the idea of a political order secular but nonetheless professedly Christian. That this seems to us almost a contradiction in terms demonstrates what has happened to the meaning of "secular" in our world. For Christian political thought, O'Donovan suggests, the alternative to "secular" should be not "religious" but "eternal." Secular government is "secular" not in the sense that it is irreligious but in the sense that its role is confined only to this age (the *saeculum*) that is passing away. It does not and cannot in any way represent the promise of the new age that comes in Christ. "Applied to political authorities, the term 'secular' should tell us that they are not agents of Christ, but are marked for displacement when the rule of God in Christ is finally disclosed. They are Christ's conquered enemies; yet they have an indirect testimony to give. . . . Like the surface of a planet pocked with craters by the bombardment it receives from space, the governments of the passing age show the impact of Christ's dawning glory." What Christendom attempts, therefore, is to reconceive government in such a way that it bears witness to the triumph of Christ while also recognizing itself as belonging only to the age that is passing away.

O'Donovan is emphatic, however, that the creation of such a political order is not the *project* of the Church's mission. That mission is to announce the rule of God in Christ, the desire of the nations. Christendom is simply a result of the Church's mission and—here is the crucial claim—"a sign that God has blessed it." Suggesting that we might usefully date the time of Christendom as lying between 313 (the Edict of Milan) and 1791 (the adoption of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution), O'Donovan traces its history and development in nineteen densely packed and richly learned pages on "the doctrine of the Two." Because the old age of the principalities and powers that have been disarmed by Christ overlaps with the coming age of God's kingdom, Christians had to explore the meaning of living within two societies. The movement of that exploration was roughly from a struggle between two societies (in the patristic period), to a vision of a single society with two foci of authority (in the medieval period), to a distinction between an inner self and its external roles in society (in the thought of Luther). Recognizing that we no longer live within the time of Christendom, O'Donovan is nonetheless unwilling to brand it a mistaken turn in the road. "The Church is not at liberty to withdraw from mission; nor may it

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undertake its mission without confident hope of success."

The core of the idea of Christendom is that each of the two authorities—which we can here call simply the Church and the state—is to render service to the other "predicated on the difference and the balance of their roles." The state serves the Church by making possible its mission; the Church serves the state by instructing it in what it means to be a "humble state." The *esse* of political authority still characterizes the humble state; it exercises power and sustains the identity of a community. But now that the new age has dawned in Christ, we can be clearer about the *bene esse*—the proper action—of political authority. Now the exercise of power and the preservation of communal identity give way somewhat to the execution of right and justice. Power is now exercised *under* law, never as if it were the ultimate source of justice and right. "The responsible state is therefore minimally coercive and minimally representative. . . . This is not a restraint imposed by the nature of political authority as such, which can thrive on excesses of traditional legitimation and on splendid displays of force; it is imposed by the limits conceded to secular authority by Christ's Kingdom."

Once again, therefore, the antiliberal strain in O'Donovan's thought is qualified. The "legal-constitutional conception," the limited state, becomes part of the wisdom the Church has to recommend to rulers of this world. Indeed, the Church may over time have learned a good bit of such worldly wisdom, which has become part of the Christian political tradition, and which may be shared with many who do not consider themselves Christian. The temptation in such circumstances is to offer for public consumption the political doctrine "as a substitute for proclaiming Christ." This is, in fact, an apt characterization of much that is currently called "public theology." What public theology has come to mean quite often is that Christian and non-Christian endorse similar political views while (privately) offering different reasons for those views. But that, O'Donovan perceptively suggests, is to withdraw from mission. "Granted, the Church may always make the best of any coincidence of political doctrine between Christians and non-Christians that it lights upon; but 'making the best' means making the evangelical content of the doctrine clear, not veiling it in embarrassment."

If the Church serves the state by helping it to be the humble state, it in turn serves the Church by creating space in which the latter's mission may be carried out. In part it accomplishes this simply by being the responsible state that understands the limits to which the dawning of God's kingdom now makes it subject. It may do this unwittingly, but it may also do it quite consciously, recognizing the Church and acknowledging its mission—and a reader should not permit the boldness of that claim to be lost in the complexities of O'Donovan's prose. The most truly Christian state will echo John the Baptist: "He must increase; I must decrease."

Not all states are likely to be so humble, of course. And part of the Church's mission is to recognize the Antichrist (who claims to unite "earthly political rule and heavenly soteriological mediation" in one agent) when he makes his appearance. In the face of the Antichrist the Church will have to be prepared for the possibility of martyrdom, but she should also confidently anticipate that the witness of her martyrs will be powerful. Hence, "the Church must be prepared to welcome the homage of the kings when it is offered to the Lord of the martyrs. . . . No honor is paid to martyrs if they are presented as mere dissidents, whose sole glory was to refuse the cultural order that was on offer to them. Martyrdom is, as the word itself indicates, witness, pointing to an alternative offer." And that alternative offer is Christendom—the humble state that knows it is destined to pass away and that, in the meantime, helps to make the Church's mission possible.

Must not such a state be coercive—at least from the perspective of those not inclined to welcome the Church's mission? To the degree that the state seeks to make possible the Church's mission, must not some members of the society feel themselves to be "outsiders," in it but not of it? It all depends. If the Church's mission has successfully taken root in the lives of many people within a society, it is quite right, O'Donovan suggests, that their deep agreements should be reflected in their government. He argues persuasively that nothing in the classical tradition of political liberalism requires otherwise. That tradition encouraged the shared pursuit of truth, and "one cannot approve the common quest for truth without approving the hope that common persuasions may emerge from it."

But what some of our contemporaries have now in fact begun to believe is that any deep social agreement is itself inherently coercive and potentially oppressive. If we acquiesce in that claim, however, the social agreements that constitute the Church would also be undercut. "If there is no religious test on the right to vote, or to have access to education or medical care, why should there be one on attending Mass and receiving communion, which is, after all, a source of satisfaction to religious temperaments and an important means of social participation?" That is where an unqualified liberal individualism lands us, and that it should find any societal consensus threatening is unsurprising. But if such a view undergirds the critique of Christendom, then, O'Donovan is suggesting, one must say a good word on behalf of Christendom. Of course, the time of Christendom is for the moment gone, but it was not wrong—and we would not be wrong—to hope that *kings* might come to the

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brightness of Christ's rising.

Nor wrong to hope that *nations* would come to his light. This directs us to the other focus of the Church's mission: not only political authorities, but also societies. If the former must ultimately disappear, the latter must be transformed. The distinctive features of liberal society in the West have, in fact, been shaped to some degree by the four moments that make up the narrative structure of the dawning of the kingdom in Christ and the narrative structure of the Church's life. Hence, O'Donovan thinks of the needed social transformation as having taken place, at least in part, when modernity brought to fruition and gave social shape to central Christian beliefs. But he also suggests that modern society has taken those beliefs and subverted them by losing the context which alone enables them to enhance human life. Thus, modern society both fulfills and subverts Christian teaching. We can briefly sketch this "pair of counterinterpretations" of modernity in terms of the same fourfold structure at work throughout the book.

Christ comes in power to save, the Church gathers his disciples through baptism in a manner that transgresses all given communal boundaries—and liberal society has its beginning in this discovery of freedom. "A society founded in conversion and baptism is a society unlike all others." Because no human authority can now be understood as ultimate, space is created for personal freedom. This is not, however, an assertion of individual freedom; rather, it is the freedom that emerges from a new community whose Lord sets it free from all other lords. If, however, individuals become nothing more than freedom, nothing other than abstract will set over against an inert nature, and if consent becomes the only moral language we know, freedom subverts the natural communities and structures of life that are required for us to learn how rightly to exercise that freedom.

Christ endures a suffering in which the judgment of the world is revealed, the Church, sharing through the eucharist in his broken body, shares also in his suffering in the world—and liberal society gradually learns the meaning of sympathy for sufferers, learns that, though judgment remains necessary, mercy in judgment is now essential. But once freedom becomes its own ground and whatever we do not will seems unintelligible, suffering can no longer be accepted. Compassion—basing itself on "the rejection of suffering rather than the acceptance of it"—replaces sympathy. Hesitation to pass judgment upon those who suffer remains, but now it is a hesitation grounded in moral insecurity rather than in religious humility.

Christ is raised to a new life as the representative of Israel's new identity, the Church, celebrating on each Lord's Day the joy of that resurrection, rejoices at the restoration of the creation—and liberal society gradually develops a concept of natural right, of a humane social order in which both the equal dignity of every human being and the importance of distinctions that make natural communities possible are affirmed. But when freedom becomes its own ground, natural right becomes simply an interest in self-preservation, and equality can no longer make room for the nonreciprocal roles that important forms of human community (such as the family) require.

The risen Christ is exalted to rule, the Church, empowered through the laying on of hands, raises up its prophetic voice in society and speaks—and liberal society gradually is instructed in an openness to speech. Rulers learn that they must be responsive to the public deliberations of the entire community. But when freedom becomes its own ground, speech becomes mere assertion of self and finally loses its point.

Thus far O'Donovan's rediscovery of the roots of our political theology, making clear that we now find ourselves in a society that in some respects fulfills the Church's mission and in other respects subverts it. This pair of counterinterpretations of modernity serves "to sharpen our understanding of the decisions we now face; to interpret the two loves which made two cities in a form appropriate to our historical situation." What we are, politically and socially, bears the unmistakable imprint of Christian thought and action. The inextricable intermingling of the two cities in human history is, by God's providence, directed toward the eternal unveiling of the Church as the city for which we hope. But in the meantime, in earthly history, the mission of the Church is to disclose to human eyes the true meaning of a city "through the prism of the Church." That is the purpose of political theology.

I have indulged myself in this lengthy summary of O'Donovan's argument not because it can substitute for the book itself but in order to offer some account of the scope and structure of his undertaking. Moreover, if O'Donovan's project is what I suggested at the outset, conceptual redescription of the world narrated by Scripture, one must first try to live within the world so narrated and see what one makes of it. Nothing is easier than to suggest what an author might have done but did not, and I do not want to engage in that kind of critique. But it may be useful to ask whether anything is missing from O'Donovan's account and, if so, what difference it might make.

One thing that is missing is the primeval history of Genesis 1-11, the backdrop against which the story of Israel, Jesus, and the Church is played out. And whatever else we make of that primeval history, it seems to teach us that the work of God in history for our salvation takes place within certain limits, the most fundamental of which is: no return to paradise is possible. The angel with the burning brand is

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placed east of Eden; Cain, first to found a city, is also author of the first fratricide; the covenant made with Noah recognizes the sad fact that within history community will always be sustained through the use of force; the scattering of the peoples at Babel makes clear that we should not hope for a single, harmonious human community.

Now, of course, O'Donovan is not wrong to see in the triumph of Christ the restoration of creation, and in the Church a community built upon trust into which all peoples are invited. But if we read that story against the backdrop of these opening chapters of the Bible, our reading may be more cautious than O'Donovan's. We will then anticipate that Christ's triumph must remain hidden under the cross, and we will be less certain that we can trace that triumph through history. We will be less eager to have the force of even a humble state joined too closely to the mission of the church.

Is this to take the triumph less seriously? Not really to treat it as a triumph? I think not. It is only to emphasize that the triumph is more evident to faith than to sight. It is only to take seriously the eschatological reservation that St. Paul himself articulates, for example, in Romans 6. The Paul who writes there that "you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart . . . and . . . have become slaves of righteousness" is the same Paul who gives the new creation a decisively future orientation. "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." To take that eschatological reservation seriously, one need not question the basic contours of the story O'Donovan tells, but one may simply emphasize that the *bene esse* of political action will not replace its *esse* (the use of force).

All that, however, is only a qualification. Something else is missing, though, from O'Donovan's account that may make a still greater difference. "No destiny can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it," he writes, "other than that of a city." It is not surprising, therefore, that, in his account, when we gaze upon the face of Christ we look at one who is "our leader and commander." What if we were to think of the God whose face is revealed in Christ not first as one who commands but as one who loves? Perhaps such a move would not be as conducive to political theology, but it might alert us to overlooked possibilities.

Can we really conceive of no destiny in this world or another than that of a city? When in Revelation 21, in a passage that plays an important role in O'Donovan's account, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down from heaven, the seer's metaphor is a decidedly mixed one. For the holy city is described in the nonpolitical imagery of marriage—as "a bride adorned for her husband." And the holy city Jerusalem that is revealed is "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." We should not too readily assume that the holy city is chiefly an image of political rule; perhaps, rather, it images a communion in which each participant is loved personally and intimately.

We might try to retell the story O'Donovan has told from this perspective—as the story of Yahweh's wooing of his bride Israel and the marriage of Christ and his Church. Not politics, then, but marriage would be the sign of God's ultimate, redeeming intention for the creation. Not command but love would be the dominant motif. The point of politics would be to make possible such private bonds of love. And the promises to Israel would point not toward a redeemed public realm but toward a hope that lies, finally, beyond that realm.

But all that is only the sketch of a story someone else might try to tell. O'Donovan has told his in a book that deserves to be widely read and discussed. We shall know the full truth of these matters only in the new Jerusalem, where, we may hope, such discussion will be a part of the praise of God. To work one's way through *The Desire of the Nations* may, therefore, be good preparation for heaven. FT

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Books In Review

Only Connect

Le Ton Beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language. By Douglas R. Hofstadter. *Basic Books. 632 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* Alan Jacobs**

Connection, linkage: this is the great task of modernist aesthetics. "Only connect!" thinks a character in E. M. Forster's *Howard's End.* "The ordinary man," reports T. S. Eliot, "falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes." Douglas Hofstadter—best known as the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning intellectual fantasia *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*—is an enthusiastic adherent of this tradition. Perhaps too enthusiastic.

In *Gödel, Escher, Bach,* Hofstadter used three figures from different intellectual disciplines—mathematics, graphic art, and musical composition—to anchor a series of reflections on such recursive structures as Möbius strips and iterated algorithms, such self-referential statements as the statement "This statement is false," and the possibility of building intelligent computers. (By profession a computer scientist, Hofstadter is a leading figure in the quest for artificial intelligence.) One of the minor themes of *Gödel, Escher, Bach* is translation: What does it mean to translate something from one language into another? Can Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" be translated? If so, what would be the French for "'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe"?

Alan Jacobs *is Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College.*

This new book, *Le Ton Beau de Marot,* takes up the question of translation in more detail. Several years ago, Hofstadter became interested in a slight, short poem, "Ma Mignonne," by the sixteenth-century French poet Clément Marot, and started wondering how it might best be translated into English. What was essential to preserve in translation, and what could be dispensed with? Hofstadter sent a copy of the poem, plus his own literal translation and an enumeration of what he felt to be the key features of the poem's structure, to "fifty, perhaps even a hundred, friends scattered around the globe." Dispersed throughout this enormous book are the responses of those friends, along with almost fifty different translations of the poem.

Clearly Hofstadter saw the text of "Ma Mignonne" as anchoring his reflections about translation in the same way that the works of Kurt Gödel, M. C. Escher, and Johann Sebastian Bach anchored his thoughts about self-reference in his first book. But the poem is in fact too slight to moor anything so active as Hofstadter's mind, and he continually goes off on tangents that take him far, far away from the question of translatability. To be sure, polymathic digressions produce much of the charm of his writing: his excursuses on ambiguous newspaper headlines ("British Left Waffles on Falklands"), palindromes, dirty jokes, and various other linguistic games are funny and provocative. But when he starts telling us of his fondness for Wendy's Spicy Chicken sandwiches, or explaining that, on a visit to Clément Marot's home town, he bought some postcards and got his hair cut before he joined some friends for dinner—well, one begins to wonder what editors at Basic Books do to earn their money.

If readers can wade through the ephemera, however, they will dis-

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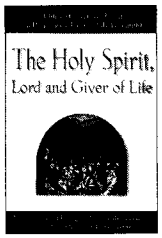

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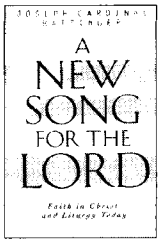
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cover that the key to his project, not just in this book but also in his research on cognition and artificial intelligence, may be found in a statement he cites from the mathematician Stanislaw Ulam: "What is it you see when you see? You see an object as a key, a man in a car as a passenger, some sheets of paper as a book. It is the word 'as' that must be mathematically formalized. . . . Until you do that, you will not get very far with your AI problem." Virtually all of Hofstadter's work revolves around this quest for "as"—which is why translation is so important.

He directs a research program on "Concepts and Cognition" that focuses on analogies and creativity, for the obvious reason that the creative thinker is the one who can find the connection, the analogy, the "as," that links the seen and known with the previously unseen and unknown. If we explore what we do when we translate a poem from one language into another, perhaps we can come to understand how analogical thinking works well enough that we can teach computers to do it. And if we can do that, thinks Hofstadter, computers will be intelligent and the quest for artificial intelligence will have succeeded.

But can we do that? Hofstadter easily punctures the hubris of computer scientists who think they have already achieved that goal, but he is even more scornful of philosophers who, like John Searle, think it impossible. For Hofstadter, there is no principle that makes artificial intelligence unrealizable—but that has something to do with what he thinks human intelligence is.

In *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, Hofstadter posits what might be called a deontological theory of consciousness, one which holds that humans think by first learning and then employing certain rules. It may seem to us that our minds aren't purely "rule-governed," but that's just an "illusion." These rules that govern the mind, Hofstadter claims, express themselves through certain patterns. We recognize patterns and thereby appropriate (even if we don't fully understand) the rules that produced those patterns. Hofstadter thinks that the ability to recognize patterns "lies very close to the core of 'pure' intelligence, if there is such a thing"—and thus, since computers follow rules and rules produce patterns and the recognition of patterns is the definition of intelligence, computers can exhibit intelligence.

It is not clear, of course, that mere recognition of patterns constitutes intelligence. Searle thinks it does not, and Hofstadter's many pages attempting a refutation of Searle attack the illustration Searle uses rather than his point as such. "Intelligence" itself may not be a particularly meaningful concept; Stephen

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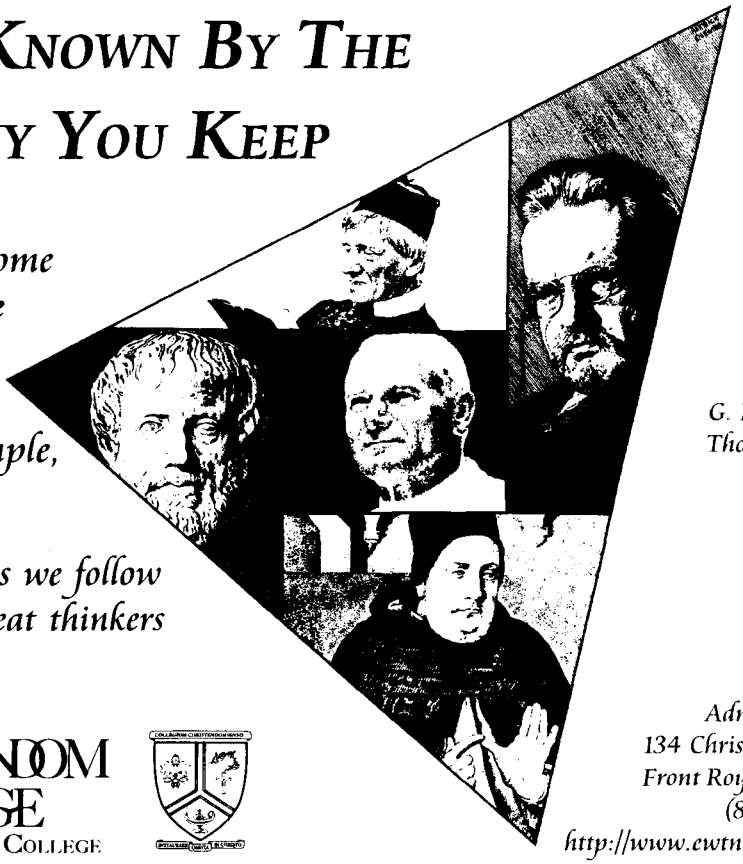

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Jay Gould, in *The Mismeasure of Man*, has done serious damage to the notion that there is a single capacity that can be called intelligence. Hofstadter makes his work a lot easier by selecting one thing that computers could plausibly be thought to possess and calling that "intelligence."

But more important for someone who wants to understand *Le Ton Beau de Marot* is Hofstadter's linking of patterns with rules, because that is the source of Hofstadter's peculiar notion of what poetry is and what the translators of poetry have to do. He hates free verse, for example, because it follows no rules, and therefore has no patterns. (And therefore, by his own definition, must not exhibit intelligence.) This is hardly a helpful description of what William Carlos Williams in *Paterson*, T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, and Ezra Pound in the *Cantos* were up to, writing poetry whose rich patterns exist even if they do not recur with regularity and predictability: their poems have patterns without discernible rules. Writing in traditional forms is no less creative; but the point to be made here is that human creativity sometimes involves the use of patterns that are not rule-governed, and the task of creating artificial intelligence is much harder than Hofstadter thinks.

Two illustrations will help to show how difficult it is for the author to grasp the notion of patterns that deviate from rules. He has a great fondness for Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* (1991), a novel in verse written entirely in a stanza derived from Aleksandr Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1831). But when Seth writes, "How can I (careless of time) use / The dusty bread molds of Onegin / In the brave bakery of Reagan?" Hofstadter thinks the first and third lines quoted need an extra syllable each, so he pauses to improve them: "How can I (careless of fashion) use / The dusty bread molds of Onegin / In the brave new bakery of Reagan?" Leaving aside the question of whether being careless of fashion is the same thing as being careless of time, we should still note that Hofstadter's mechanical sense of rhythm demands that a line not have two stressed syllables in a row (time-use, brave-bake). Of course, good poets vary stresses all the time to avoid mind-numbing repetition over the length of a poem—especially a book-length poem. But if pattern-recognition is the heart of intelligence, and patterns must follow rules, then the disruption of pattern is a sin against intellect.

My second illustration comes from Hofstadter's impossibly long discussion of how Dante should be translated. Notwithstanding the fact, which he cheerfully admits, that he has read none of the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso* and only some of the *Inferno*, he howls in outrage when

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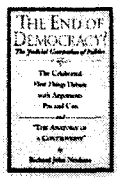

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he notes how few translators stick with Dante's linked *terza rima* in their English versions. Hofstadter can't imagine why none of the widely used translations of Dante keep to this form, and he thinks their neglect is a kind of betrayal.

But the answer is simple: Italian is a very rhyme-rich language (in large part because so many of its words end in vowels), while English is rhyme-poor. The translator who reproduces in English Dante's rhyme scheme is continually forced into unnatural word order and peculiar word choice. (Compare Dorothy Sayers' persistently clunky *terza rima* with the more flexible forms preferred by John Ciardi or Mark Musa and you'll see what I mean.) For the same reason, translators of French poetry into English routinely replace the six-beat alexandrines common in French with the pentameter that suits the rhythms of English. (W. H. Auden was right to say that alexandrines always sound comic in English.) Elsewhere in the book, Hofstadter acknowledges the difficulty deciding what it means to produce a "faithful" translation, but he is so insistent about how Dante should be rendered into English because the rule-governed pattern of the poet's *terza rima* is more important than euphony, clarity, or narrative coherence. But since the pattern is perfectly accessible to people who don't know a word of Italian, why bother to translate Dante at all?

OF COURSE, Hofstadter isn't really interested in the product of the act of translation, but the act itself. He hopes, by investigating his own translations and those of his friends, to understand better how the human mind makes analogies, and thereby to forward the quest for artificial intelligence.

And on the question of why we should want computers to be intelligent, he says something rather bold and surprising: "Why should a race of benevolent if fleshless beings be any less worthy of being considered our 'children's children' than the potential gang of music-polluters, lyrical rapists, priest-assassins, and mob-frenzied jackbooted genocide perpetrators that might spring forth from the celestial union of my eager sperms with your equally eager ova?" (Hofstadter's prose isn't always this out-of-control, but often it is.) Though he mentions his children often and dedicates the book to them, he does not seem to relish turning over the world to them, and he seems more willing to trust children he made than those he begot.

Here again is Hofstadter's debt to modernist aesthetics: the poet (or the computer scientist) as rival creator to God. He never asks whether a group of potential "genocide perpetrators" is likely to create beings characterized primarily by "benevo-

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lence," and his hope seems to be that we can make computers intelligent by teaching them patterns and make them good by *avoiding* teaching them greed. And if virtue were merely the absence of vice, rather than the fruit of spiritual and moral discipline, that hope might be a believable one. Alas.

One thing more. A substantial portion of this book is devoted to a kind of tribute—seemingly out of place in this context, but moving nonetheless—to Hofstadter's late wife Carol, who died rather suddenly from a brain tumor in 1993, leaving him to raise their two young children alone. One is left wondering whether Hofstadter is perhaps envisioning computers as electronic companions who will not die and leave us behind. Hofstadter is at heart a Gnostic: he thinks of our bodies as merely the containers of our immaterial essence, and wants us to consider computers as potential children (and spouses?) because our sense of human identity should have nothing to do with our genetics and everything to do with "something more abstract, something based on a certain way of thinking and feeling and caring, irrespective of the physical medium in which it [our identity] is embedded." A person's identity dies, Hofstadter thinks, because it was "embedded" in an all-too-fragile "physical medium." Here again God screwed up, and we will not repeat His mistakes: If the AI people get it right, our cyber-children and cyber-friends and cyber-spouses may have to grieve our passing, but we will never have to grieve theirs.

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Saving Liberalism's Soul

THE GROWTH OF THE LIBERAL SOUL. By DAVID WALSH. *University of Missouri Press. 386 pp. $39.95.*

***Reviewed by* Peter Berkowitz**

ON GOOD LIBERAL grounds alone, academic liberals should appreciate David Walsh's powerful new defense of liberalism. A valuable contribution to the increasingly edifying debate led by conservatives over liberalism's future, this book gently but firmly exposes the illusions that conceal from contemporary liberalism the source of the liberal spirit's

PETER BERKOWITZ *teaches government at Harvard University and is the author of* Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist *(Harvard University Press). His new book,* Virtue and the Making of Modern Liberalism, *is forthcoming from Princeton University Press.*

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formidable moral authority.

Walsh brings the fundamental illusion into focus in a brief discussion of what is by common consent the masterpiece of academic liberalism, John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971). Although that text is devoted primarily to constructing an ideal theory of justice, Rawls does consider whether his principles of justice—equal liberty and the toleration of inequalities so long as they benefit all—can form the basis of any actual polity. And to the question of whether, under his principle that allowable inequalities must benefit the least-well off, the poor will still resent the greater resources of the wealthy even as the wealthy will resent the sacrifices they must make to improve the lot of the poor, Rawls makes the simple and astounding answer: No. Rawls asserts that liberal principles will cure the selfish passions because they "lead to social arrangements in which envy and other destructive feelings are not likely to be strong. The conception of justice eliminates the conditions that give rise to disruptive attitudes. It is, therefore, inherently stable." To this quite debatable empirical proposition, for which Rawls provides scarcely a shred of empirical evidence, Walsh asks, "Are not envy and vanity and the desire to dominate more deeply rooted temptations than Rawlsian liberalism seems to suspect? Do we not sense them as possibilities that can perhaps infect even our most noble aspirations?"

Walsh supplies, from within *A Theory of Justice* itself, Rawls' answer to these doubts: "Men's propensity to injustice," Rawls coolly asserts, "is not a permanent aspect of community life; it is greater or less depending in large part on social institutions, and in particular on whether these are just or unjust." Rawls' sentiments (an appropriate word since little in the way of argument about moral psychology or human nature is adduced to support them) are seen by Walsh as a contemporary manifestation of John Stuart Mill's illusion of inevitable progress, the conceit that history and enlightenment are cooperating to bring about the moral improvement of mankind. Rawls' sentiments of course could as easily be seen as an expression of the idea often associated with Rousseau that man is born good and made bad by society. Or they could be viewed as a descendant of the Marxian belief that once the crippling effects of the division of labor have been overcome and the state has withered away, then social life can be organized so as to overcome alienation, actualize equality, and make men and women perfectly free.

But whatever their provenance, to subscribe to Rawls' sentiments at this late date it is necessary to ignore the ample evidence offered by history, literature, and the morning newspaper. In other words, what contem-

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porary liberalism so alarmingly lacks is knowledge of the complexities—the heights as well as the depths—of the human heart.

Walsh is hardly the first to point this out. What distinguishes his study is the emphasis he places on liberalism's "existential appeal." This consists in the liberal tradition's ability to give political expression to the principle or moral belief, widely shared among modern men and women, that the individual is sacred, the unique bearer of a fundamental human dignity. Walsh sees this belief as part of the Christian heritage of the West—and again, he is by no means the first to view the liberal tradition as in considerable measure a secular and political development of Christian morality. But he is not simply siding with those conservatives who argue that the secularization of Christianity in liberalism has betrayed its patrimony and is rapidly depleting its accumulated moral capital. Rather, Walsh sees in the liberal tradition a distinctive development and deepening on the political plane of the Christian belief in the transcendent dignity of the human being; but he sees that this development and deepening have come to endanger liberalism's genuine achievements by cutting the liberal spirit off from the sources that sustain it.

The problem is reflected in the discrepancy between liberalism's extraordinary political achievements and the anxiety that is felt all around about its future. Everywhere that freedom has been tasted, liberalism or democracy limited by liberal principles has come to be seen as the standard of legitimacy, "the most appropriate form of government for human beings . . . the form of order that speaks to our human dignity as rational, self-governing beings." And yet, Walsh argues, liberalism's most powerful philosophical critics, extending back to Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky, continue to suspect it of issuing in moral relativism and the anarchy of mere appetite.

Many today see support for this suspicion in the increasingly severe social problems, cultural cleavages, and impoverished public life that afflict liberal democracy in America. And they find further confirmation that nihilism is the truth of liberalism in the resolute refusal of liberalism's most esteemed philosophical proponents to provide a reasoned defense of liberal principles. To be sure, contemporary liberals such as Rawls and Richard Rorty present their unwillingness to give an account of liberalism's foundations as a mark of philosophical virtue, the intellectual equivalent of learning to live within one's own means. Walsh sees the virtue in such philosophical modesty, but he sees as well the pride that contemporary liberals take in their self-imposed intellectual austerity, and he hears the boast in their implicit claim that their modest means are the only valid ones.

In the contemporary crisis, Walsh

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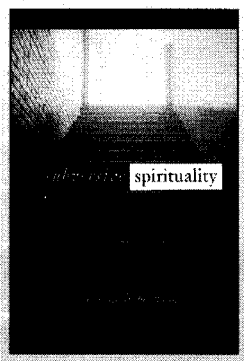
In *Subversive Spirituality* respected pastor, author, and teacher Eugene Peterson has gathered together a host of writings penned over the past twenty-five years that reflect on the overlooked facets of the spiritual life. Comprising occasional pieces, short biblical studies, poetry, pastoral readings, and interviews, this work captures the epiphanies of life with the pleasing pastoral style and inspiring depth of insight for which Peterson is well known.



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argues, such false modesty is precisely the luxury liberalism cannot afford. While the liberal tradition has weathered many storms, it has never faced its current threat: the weakening grip of its existential core or animating spirit. When Christian belief was strong and widely shared, when an unspoken and deeply felt moral consensus about the sanctity of the individual prevailed, liberal regimes could function quite well without a fine-grained articulation of the goodness of freedom. But when these sustaining beliefs are shaken or corroded, articulating the moral sources of the liberal spirit takes on a new urgency.

Liberalism is not the sole cause of the crisis that has overtaken it, but according to Walsh it bears a considerable measure of responsibility. The goodness of individual liberty points toward a transcendent good whose support the liberal tradition has been steadily driven to disown and whose reality liberalism increasingly feels compelled to deny. The ethos of liberal neutrality seems to have at last forced liberalism to become neutral regarding its own goodness. The liberal longing for increasingly comprehensive kinds of freedom has come to threaten the respect for limits and order that are freedom's precondition. The liberal state's care for the individual runs the risk of turning citizens into irresponsible individuals unable to care for themselves. And the premium liberal thought places on dispassionate judgment and instrumental reasoning, though born of the moral intention to respect individuals by respecting their abstract rights, dehumanizes officeholders and bureaucrats as well as ordinary citizens by promoting a view of human beings as objects of technical manipulation.

Through extended discussions of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Mill, and Tocqueville, Walsh explores the resources within the liberal tradition for renewing the liberal spirit. In keeping with his guiding conviction that the liberal tradition is animated by a "spiritual core" whose foundations it covers in silence, Walsh seeks to illustrate the myriad ways in which devotion to the sanctity of the individual and a conviction of the necessity of personal freedom for the realization of human dignity organized and anchored the thought of the makers of modern liberalism. Not all his illustrations are equally persuasive, but all are thoughtfully drawn and deserving of careful consideration.

Walsh is more sanguine than many conservative commentators concerning the prospects for renewing the liberal spirit, although the obstacles to that renewal are, he acknowledges, certainly daunting. His approach is to build on moral aspirations that are already present in experience—though growing thinner and dimmer all the time—and to reason as much as possible from within the structure of liberal thought.

A model of his approach is his provocative discussion of abortion. On the one hand, he sees how the demand for protection of a woman's right to choose an abortion has roots in the liberal respect for the protection of individual freedom. On the other hand, he observes that treating a fetus (or unborn child) as a thing to be disposed of for the convenience of another rather than as a developing human being corrodes the devotion to the sanctity of the individual that lies at the foundation of the liberal concern for freedom. Walsh does not argue, like Rawls and Habermas and the deliberative democrats who follow them, that the only valid arguments about abortion in a liberal democracy must be based on universal abstract moral principles to which all can in principle agree. Nor does he argue on the basis of religious dogma. Rather, he contends that abortion is bad for liberty because it damages the spirit that sustains respect for the individual.

IN SUM, Walsh shows that today more than ever the defense of the liberal spirit requires reflection on the needs of the human soul. And he makes a convincing case that a philosophy, however high-minded its intentions, that denies itself the right to ask questions about the needs of the human soul leaves liberalism defenseless against the confusion and slackening of spirit that now assail it.

Walsh's argument is complex and compelling. He writes with generosity and clarity about a remarkable range of texts, and his analysis is enlivened by colorful metaphors and arresting insights. True, his book is made too long by a repetitiveness that tests the patience of even a friendly

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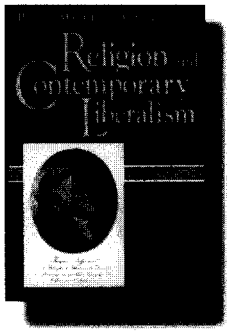

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Selected Essays on Liberalism, Tradition, and Civil Society

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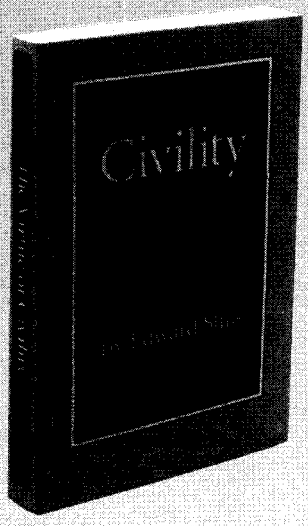

Edward Shils (1920–1995) was one of the leading intellectual defenders of freedom in the twentieth century. Learned in history, politics, literature, economics, theology, and legal history, he taught for many years at the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought and at Peterhouse College, Cambridge. In these nine essays, Shils explores the importance of civility and tradition to a free society. The essays' significance is enormous, for Shils was one of the first and assuredly one of the most courageous writers to examine the natures of civility and civil society and their relation to a free, ordered, liberal democratic society. As H.R. Trevor-Roper has written, "Deeply concerned for the Western values of rationality, freedom, and progress, Shils was dismayed by the threat which they now faced: the threat posed by the absolute individualism into which Western Liberalism had degenerated." Among the essays are "Tradition and Liberty: Antinomy and Interdependence," "Max Weber and the World Since 1920," and "The Modern University and Liberal Democracy."

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reader, and readers who are not friendly are sure to be put off by his occasional recourse to the language of faith. That, however, is their loss, for time and again Walsh illuminates the heart of the matter: the liberal tradition has greatly advanced the cause of human dignity, but there have been costs, and even liberalism's solid achievements have been made vulnerable by a progress that has left liberals increasingly unable to say what freedom is good for and why individuals are worth respecting.

Because his criticism of the liberal tradition is bound up with a genuine admiration for its achievements, Walsh is an unusually judicious guide to the infirmities of academic liberalism: the uncritical self-assurance of its own essential correctness; a pride in its own tolerance that is often manifested in sanctimonious and unyielding condescension toward opposing viewpoints; and a narrow and intense concentration on principles and their implications for public and private law accompanied by a disregard for the impact of the actualization of those principles on citizens' character. Walsh calls liberalism back to its sustaining sources and reminds it of the virtues that enable it to honor its core principles. He criticizes contemporary liberalism in the name of the liberal spirit, and in the course of his criticism he defends the liberal spirit by displaying it in action.

A Mystery Wrapped in an Enigma

THE CONSCIOUS MIND: IN SEARCH OF A FUNDAMENTAL THEORY. By DAVID J. CHALMERS. *Oxford University Press. 414 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Stephen M. Barr**

PHYSICS CANNOT EXPLAIN why an apple looks red. This will surprise some people, but it is a fact that can hardly be disputed. Physics does indeed tell us why an apple reflects red light and what red light is—an electromagnetic wave whose wavelength is between 620 and 700 nanometers. Biophysics can explain why different wavelengths of light affect certain retinal cells differently, and thus how the brain can tell one color of light from another.

But what is left to explain is why the apple looks red, the sensual experience of redness. Why is it that when I see light of 650 nanometers I do not experience the sensation of shocking pink or pale yellow, rather than red? Indeed, if mechanical devices can distinguish wavelengths of light without having sensations, then why do I experience any sensa-

STEPHEN M. BARR *is Associate Professor of Physics at the Bartol Research Institute, University of Delaware.*

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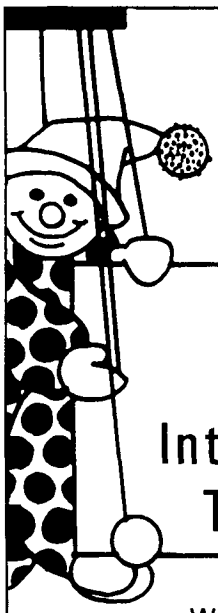
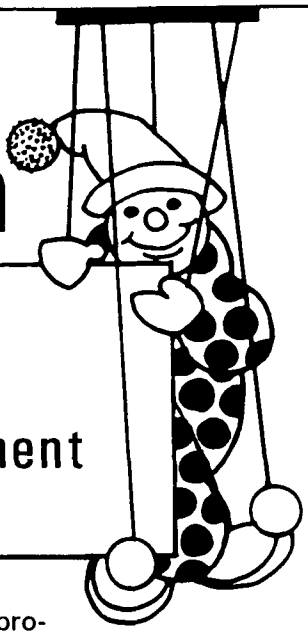


The Credo of Liberal Catholicism



A God without wrath
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Through a Christ without a cross.*

Walk into your typical liberal Catholic parish, and what do you hear in Father Flapdoodle's homily? God is love, love, love. God is tender and compassionate, and She accepts you *just as you are*. You don't hear about the wrath of God, for She never gets angry.

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Since sin is a non-issue, nobody could possibly go to Hell. God is nonjudgmental and inclusive, and everyone floats off to Heaven in a pink sailboat.

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*Adapted from: H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Harper & Bros., 1937). Rendered in "non-sexist" language — our apologies to Niebuhr.

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2. *Karl Barth (1886-1968), virtually all of his works have been published in English, but of these English translation, 14 are now out-of-print.*

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tion at all?

This is what philosophers nowadays call the problem of "qualia." Physics deals exclusively with quantities: The equations of theoretical physics allow one to calculate only quantities, and the devices of experimental physics measure only quantities. But since one cannot reduce to numbers what it is like to have a toothache or a paper-cut, to taste licorice or smell a lilac, to hear a flute or fingernails on a chalkboard, it is impossible that these subjective experiences, these qualia, can be derived from any equation. As Erwin Schrödinger put it, "[While] all scientific knowledge is based on sense perceptions, the scientific views of natural processes formed in this way lack all sensual qualities and therefore cannot account for the latter."

This problem of qualia is an important part of the larger "problem of consciousness" that is receiving increasing attention from both philosophers and scientists. Most scientific materialists, however, remain unable to admit that there is any problem whatever. Their dogma that all of reality is expressed in physics forces them to declare that anything about subjective experience underivable from physics must be unreal. The attitude of Niels Bohr is typical: "The question of whether [a] machine *really* feels or ponders, or whether it merely looks as though it did, is of course absolutely meaningless."

This view of reality leads to various behavioristic conceptions of the mind. In the "logical behaviorism" of Gilbert Ryle, the mind is analyzed in terms of dispositions to behave in certain ways. In the less crude "functionalism" put forward in the 1960s, internal mental states—though acknowledged to exist—are defined in terms of their role in causing behavior: produced by certain stimuli, they interact with other internal states and tend to lead to certain behavior. There is nothing in all of this that cannot be applied to the internal states of a computer, or indeed of a microwave oven.

To the extent that subjective experience is noticed at all by the modern materialist, it is dealt with—and eliminated—by the "identity theory," according to which mental states and brain states are the same. This is the reigning orthodoxy in modern cognitive science. In the words of the philosopher Hilary Putnam, "It is no longer possible to believe that the mind-body problem is a genuine theoretical problem, or that a 'solution' would shed the slightest light on the world in which we live."

DAVID J. CHALMERS, a young Australian-born professor of philosophy at the University of California-Santa Cruz has written a book saying that there really is a problem, that there really is something called consciousness, and that we really do not have even the beginnings of a theoretical understanding of it. His book has attracted considerable attention both within the academic world and in the popular press. That this should be so when he is merely arguing for something transparently obvious may seem odd, but we should be thankful, for we live in an age when the obvious has few partisans.

Chalmers accepts a great deal of the current orthodoxy. He has no doubt that a mechanistic account can be given of all of the behavioral "cognitive mind," including our capacity to understand and to will. He certainly does not believe in a spiritual component in man. He does believe, however, that missing from the physicalist picture is the "phenomenal mind": the realm of subjective experience and its sensual aspects, the qualia.

Building on the arguments of many philosophers, notably Frank Jackson and Saul Kripke, Chalmers makes the case very powerfully that physical science cannot explain qualia. He is forced, against his own admitted predispositions, to reject materialism and embrace what he dubs a "naturalistic dualism." What makes his dualism naturalistic, he says, is that he posits no "transcendental element" (by which he probably means a soul or spirit). He believes that behavior can be entirely explained physically, and he thinks

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that consciousness can be naturally, though not physically, explained.

Chalmers makes some advance beyond people like Roger Penrose who suggest merely that consciousness cannot be explained by the presently known laws of physics: *No* physical laws, Chalmers argues, could ever explain qualia. But his own "natural explanation" that consciousness will be explained by "psycho-physical laws" remains unclear. What might such psycho-physical laws look like? They cannot be equations, for then they would no more explain qualia than do the laws of physics. Indeed they would be, in effect, just additional laws of physics. Indeed, there is a question of whether it makes sense even to talk about a "theory" of qualia: If a theory is something by which we understand, and a sensation something we feel, how can a theory ever capture sensation?

Chalmers creates an even greater difficulty for himself by his belief that all of behavior can be understood physically. He has to believe this because he takes it to be a fact that "the physical domain is causally closed" and therefore cannot be influenced by anything that lies outside of physics, such as the "phenomenal mind." For him, consciousness is entirely passive, and he believes he thereby escapes the well-known conundrums of "interactionist dualism."

He ends up, however, in a worse bind, for writing this book was a form of behavior, and there is no way, in his scheme, that his "phenomenal mind"—his experiences of qualia, his consciousness—can have had any influence on what his fingers typed. Indeed, they can have no influence on what he believes about consciousness, since belief for him lies in the behavioral and physically determined "cognitive mind." To put it bluntly, if his non-interactionist dualism is right then he cannot know anything about consciousness and we cannot learn about it by reading his book. He struggles unsuccessfully with this problem:

> One might conclude that the *physical* portion of me (my brain, say) is not justified in its belief [that I am conscious]. But the question is whether *I* am justified in my belief, not whether my *brain* is justified in its belief; . . . there is more to me than my brain. I *know* I am conscious, and the knowledge is based solely upon my immediate experience.

He may know more than his brain, but according to Chalmers' own theory it is his brain that wrote the book. Indeed, his brain wrote those sentences, and I wonder how it wrote so knowledgeably about all the things that Chalmers knows and his brain does not.

The truth is that Chalmers need not have gotten into this predicament, for the physical world is not "causally closed." For example, no physical reason can be given why a radioactive nucleus decays at this moment rather than that. Chalmers is fully conversant with the ideas of quantum theory, and so he hedges at one point: "The physical world is more or less causally closed, in that for any given physical event it seems there is a physical explanation ([leaving aside] a small amount of quantum indeterminacy)." The effects of quantum indeterminacy, however, are not necessarily small. In fact, the argument should be turned around, and was in an excellent article by the philosopher and physicist Avshalom Elitzur in 1989. We know from arguments like Chalmers' that consciousness is not explicable entirely by physics. But consciousness clearly affects behavior, and in particular the behavior of people who worry aloud whether their consciousness is explicable entirely by physics! And therefore the physical domain cannot be causally closed. (Though Elitzur himself does not think quantum indeterminacy provides the causal opening.)

The problem of qualia and of consciousness bears out an observation made by Monsignor Ronald Knox in *The Hidden Stream*, where he noted that the supernatural mysteries of faith involve realities about which

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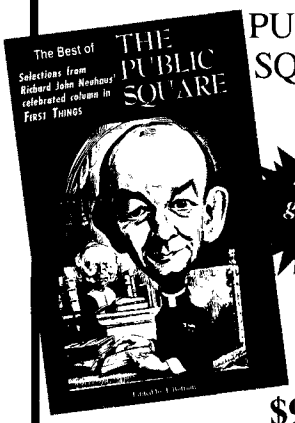

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there is already a mystery at the natural level:

> It's not surprising that there is a problem of free will in revealed theology, because there is a problem of free will in common or garden philosophy. The mystery comes in just where you would expect it to come in; where there is a mystery anyhow. The way I have tried to put it . . . is that you may picture human thought as a piece of solid rock, but with a crevice here and there—the places, I mean, where we think and think and it just does not add up. And the Christian mysteries are like tufts of blossom which seem to grow in those particular crevices, there and nowhere else.

Before the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation there is already the mystery of personality. Before the mystery of the Real Presence there is already the mystery of appearance and reality. Before the mystery of spirit, there is the mystery of mind. Chalmers is unaware of supernatural mysteries. Indeed, he is blind even to the natural mysteries of human freedom and rationality. He is concerning himself with things on the much lower level of mere sensation, which we have in common with brutes. Yet even here there is an enigma.

In Knox's words, qualia are something about which we "think and think and it just does not add up." Do the qualia pertain to the level of matter, in which case there is something about matter itself that escapes the laws of physics? Or do they pertain to spirit, in which case we should have to say that animals lack subjective experience? Or is there something between matter and spirit, above the merely physical, but below the rational? None of these ideas is easy to credit.

But whatever qualia are, they are real. And that alone tells us that simple-minded materialism cannot be right.

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Reclaiming Natural Law

WRITTEN ON THE HEART: THE CASE FOR NATURAL LAW. By J. BUDZISZEWSKI. *InterVarsity Press. 240 pp. $14.99 paper.*

A PRESERVING GRACE: PROTESTANTS, CATHOLICS, AND NATURAL LAW. Edited by MICHAEL CROMARTIE. *Eerdmans. 195 pp. $20 paper.*

Reviewed by **Dean C. Curry**

IN THE PREFACE to *A Preserving Grace,* Michael Cromartie of the Ethics and Public Policy Center speaks of a renewed interest among American Christians in natural law, and the publication of Cromartie's volume simultaneously with J. Budziszewski's *Written on the Heart* provides welcome evidence of the revival of thoughtful, religiously grounded thinking about natural law.

These are different kinds of books. Cromartie's is a thought-provoking collection of conference papers and commentaries covering topics ranging from the secularization of natural law thinking within Catholic moral theology to the understandings of natural law within reformed, or Calvinistic, Protestantism. The book's focal essays, written by Russell Hittinger, Susan Schreiner, Daniel Westberg, and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, are supplemented by enlightening, and often feisty, exchanges between an ecumenical group of Catholic, mainline, and evangelical scholars that includes Robert George, Carl Braaten, and James Skillen.

Budziszewski's book, on the other hand, is a more focused, textbook-like discussion of the intellectual

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evolution of the natural law tradition that includes major units on Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, and Mill. In covering material in such encyclopedic fashion, Budziszewski's transitions are sometimes not as clear as they could be and his argument, at times, reads like a transcript of his undergraduate lectures at the University of Texas. Nevertheless, this book is an informative and often interesting primer on natural law.

In spite of their differences of format and focus, there are common themes that run through *A Preserving Grace* and *Written on the Heart.* Of particular note is the vigor with which both books defend the natural law tradition. Budziszewski claims that his is "a book with an attitude" whose purpose is to defend "an embattled tradition," while Cromartie hopes that renewed attention to natural law will "strengthen the influence of moral values in our common life." And yet, as valuable as both these books are in terms of defending natural law and its importance to the ordering of our life together, perhaps their most significant contribution lies in helping us understand why natural law has been such a point of controversy to people of faith, and why many people of faith today are once again interested in reclaiming this tradition.

THE NOTION THAT there exist universal moral principles that are knowable to everyone is an ancient one, with roots that extend back to Aristotle and, even further, to the rabbinical tradition of the Noahide commandments. But as Budziszewski reminds us, it is Thomas Aquinas' synthesis of faith and reason that defined the contours of the Christian understanding of natural law for eight centuries.

In brief, Thomas held Aristotle in high regard, especially his insight that reason provides knowledge of the highest good. At the same time, Thomas was a man of Christian faith who believed that reason was a reliable guide to knowledge only because it was tethered to the Divine. Reason presupposes faith, and both faith and reason come from God. Natural law is the moral law written on every human heart that instructs human beings of their natural good. This law is not salvific—it cannot bring reconciliation with God—but it allows human beings access to those "first principles of practical reason" that point us to the common good.

This Thomist formulation of natural law became an integral component of Christian theology and remained unchallenged until the Protestant Reformation, when, according to Budziszewski, the crisis in the tradition began. The relation of the Protestant Reformers to natural law has been hotly debated for much of this century. This scholarly controversy is succinctly chronicled by Susan Schreiner in her valuable contribution to *A Preserving Grace*, which convincingly demonstrates that such leaders of the Reformation as Calvin and Melanchthon never assailed natural law. Budziszewski attempts to extend the point, suggesting that the mainstream Protestant Reformers in question "saw no problem with natural law," but Daniel Westberg, in a companion essay to Schreiner's, is more nuanced, arguing that the Reformed tradition's stance vis-à-vis natural law has been "moderate"—not opposed to it, but suspicious nonetheless.

Schreiner is convincing in arguing that natural law, or "the dictates of nature," was central to John Calvin's theological understanding. Budziszewski goes on to locate in other and later Reformers the first natural law "rejectionists," those who believed that the corrupting effects of the Fall undermined any possibility that human reason could grasp the purposes of God. This "bleak interpretation" led, in time, to two responses: one that rejected natural law in toto and another that, rather than rejecting it outright, reinterpreted natural law by focus-

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ing not on the order of creation—now corrupt and unknowable—but on the consequences or implication of creation's ruin. From this latter rejectionist path Budziszewski traces the origins of modern natural law in Hobbes, Locke, and their contemporary secular heirs. It is from among the former group of rejectionists, those who rejected natural law completely, however, that the roots of twentieth-century Protestantism's hostility to natural law are found.

IN BOTH BOOKS much is said about Karl Barth's antipathy toward natural law and the considerable influence of his viewpoint within the Protestant world. In Cromartie's volume, Carl Braaten summarizes Barth's views of natural law as "a Trojan horse inside the walls of the Church," whose "cradle is not biblical revelation but pagan metaphysics." In a later essay, William Edgar rightly locates Barth's critique of natural law within a larger Barthian project of deconstructing liberal Protestantism's optimistic confidence in human reason. For Barth, sin has "obliterated" (as Schreiner puts it) any possibility of knowing truth apart from God's word; thus there can be "no common ground, no point of contact" (as Budziszewski suggests) between believers and nonbelievers.

As important as Barth is to understanding Protestantism's drift away from natural law, it is a weakness of both books that neither pays attention to the impact of evangelical theology and culture in intensifying that drift. In particular, many of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Protestants most closely associated with the theological orthodoxy of the Reformers rejected the Reformers' embrace of natural law because, from their post-Enlightenment perspective, the epistemology of natural law looked indistinguishable from secular rationalism.

Among evangelical theologians in the twentieth century, this opposition to natural law found an especially influential voice in the scholarship and teaching of Cornelius Van Til, who argued that the unregenerate are "as blind as a mole" in matters of truth. "The sinner," cautions Van Til, "has cemented colored glasses to his eye which he cannot remove. And all is yellowed to the jaundiced eye." To be sure, most American evangelicals have never heard of Cornelius Van Til or his presuppositional theology. Nevertheless, his Word-centered epistemology makes him, along with Barth, a major reason American Protestantism became uncomfortable with the natural law tradition.

There is, of course, another factor that has contributed to the crisis in natural law thinking, and that factor has little to do with theology per se. There can be little doubt that much of American Protestantism's reluctance derives from the close association of natural law with Roman Catholicism. For much of this century a virulent strain of anti-Catholic bigotry infused Protestant fundamentalism. Ironically, however, it is within the cultural dynamic of the historically hostile evangelical-Catholic relationship that we find an explanation for the renewed interest in natural law addressed by Cromartie and Budziszewski.

OVER THE PAST decade much has been written about America's culture wars and the resulting rapprochement between evangelicals and Catholics. While old suspicions linger in some quarters, the commitment to discoverable truth and absolute moral authority among many evangelicals and Catholics has allowed them to forge a common public agenda. In turn, their work on behalf of a common cultural vision has made both groups more willing to focus on the theological beliefs that unite them rather than on those beliefs that separate them. A consequence of this cultural transformation has been that evangelicals are more willing to revisit theological

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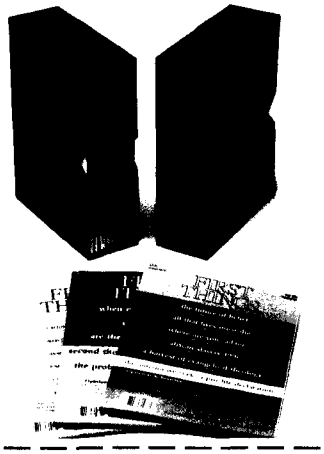

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traditions that Catholics and Protestants have historically shared.

As evangelicals and Catholics have pursued their cultural agenda they have had to learn to speak a language suitable for engaging the public moral discourse in American life. This task has proven easier for Catholics, for whom the natural law tradition has always been an integral part of their church's social teaching. For evangelicals, however, the task of translating their religiously based principles into a public language has proved challenging and even sometimes divisive. Some evangelicals have resisted speaking in a common vernacular, believing that the Christian's cultural witness should be explicitly Christian and that fidelity to a Bible-only epistemology is an imperative transcending considerations of efficacy in matters of public life. Other evangelicals, believing that biblical faithfulness requires effective cultural engagement, have been drawn anew to natural law.

For these evangelicals, as well as for all people of faith, *Written on the Heart* and *A Preserving Grace* provide a useful guide to understanding a rich theological tradition that, for centuries, has well served the citizens of the City of God in their earthly sojourn.

Statecraft and Stagecraft

American Catholic: The Saints and Sinners Who Built America's Most Powerful Church. By Charles R. Morris. *Times Books. 511 pp. $27.50.*

***Reviewed by* George McKenna**

Social historian and commentator Charles Morris' new study of the development and current situation of the Catholic Church in America is an important, beautifully written, and finally very troubling book.

Most of it is historical, chronicling the Catholic Church's travails in America from roughly the mid-nineteenth century (by which point the Irish-American clergy had assumed full command) to the end of the 1960s. Morris reviews the work and the competing visions of such major figures in American Catholicism as Archbishop John Hughes of New York, who steered the American Church away from assimilation, creating a powerful Irish Catholic subculture, and Bishop John Ireland, who pushed the opposite way, toward "Americanism." By the early twentieth century, Morris notes, these positions had been synthesized into a uniquely American brand of Catholicism, fiercely patriotic yet culturally self-contained. This marked the beginning of a new self-confident period in American Catholicism, the "Going My Way" era that culminated in the 1950s with Bishop Sheen on television and Cardinal Spellman blessing the troops.

And yet, within ten years it all fell apart, and Morris ends his historical section by revisiting the tumultuous 1960s, when the American Catholic Church lost its élan, its unselfconscious unity, and a large portion of its clergy. In the last section of his book, he examines the state of the Church in America in our own post-1960s days. Relying heavily on his interviews with American Catholics and visits to parishes around the country, he finds good and bad news. He notes that the hemorrhage of vocations has been largely stanched and he finds vibrant religious life at the parish level even as "liberal" and "conservative" Catholic theologians continue to fight it out and, in his version of the situation, tensions with Rome increase.

Morris has a journalist's flair for vivid description. He captures the great pomp and gaudiness of the 1879 dedication Mass at New York's City's St. Patrick's Cathedral, describing the procession into the Cathedral as starting with "a solemn line of altar boys in black cassocks and white surplices washed and bleached by their mothers to the brightness of snow, hair slicked down, eyes straight ahead," and culminating in bishops and archbishops with glittering miters encrusted with precious stones and robes "so thickly embroidered with gold thread that they presented a solid field of gold to the spectator."

Morris is also, at times, exasperating, though this is really the excess of a virtue, arising from the author's ev-

George McKenna *is Professor of Political Science at City College of New York and author of* The Drama of Democracy.

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ident determination to deal fairly with both sides of the debate between "liberal" and "conservative" Catholicism. It is clear that Morris, an admirer of Mario Cuomo and Andrew Greeley (reciprocated by both on the dust jacket), belongs in the liberal camp, yet he strives so hard for balance that he leaves the argument in a state of perfect equipoise. While rejecting the possibility of returning to the "carapaced" Catholicism of the past, he observes that it was precisely its "prickly apartness" that gave the Church its organizational strength in America. He endorses most of the liberal agenda, from women deacons (even women cardinals) to acceptance of homosexual behavior, divorce, and at least early abortions, yet he warns against following mainstream Protestantism down the slope of assimilationism. So where are we? "Carapaced" Catholicism won't work, but it was essential to the Church's survival in America. The Church should liberalize its doctrines, but look what happened to Protestantantism when it did just that. He ends with a series of unresolved dilemmas.

A more serious problem with this book is its relentlessly political treatment of the Catholic Church. Scattered through the book are expressions like "power jockeying" and "the fix was in." Morris finds it "hard to believe" that Pius XII's attempt to mediate peace between Germany and the Allies during World War II was not motivated by a desire to "increase his own, and the Vatican's, stature," and he presumes that today's Vatican "has been hamstringing national and local ecclesiastical authority" because it is "jealous of its own powers." As for the Catholic Church in this country, Morris savors a joke about its identity to Tammany Hall, compares the Chicago hierarchy in the 1950s with Mayor Daley's political machine, and leaves the impression that the main reason Americans joined the Catholic clergy during most of our history was the prospect of power and prestige, or, in the case of nuns, economic security and psychological fulfillment.

Let us stipulate that the Church is a political institution. For the past two thousand years it has been providing governance for its members while negotiating the often perilous currents of the world. This is politics, requiring political skill and not a little wheeling and dealing. But Catholics—and Morris is apparently a practicing Catholic—also believe something else about their Church: that it is a divinely founded institution whose most authoritative pronouncements, however messily arrived at, bear the stamp of the divine. Perhaps it is a little awkward to say that to non-Catholics, and a Catholic-written book on Church history doesn't have to. But doesn't it need to leave some room for that perspective? One finds it nowhere in this book, which views the history of the Catholic Church in America through the single lens of power politics.

WHAT IT COMES down to at last is a question of allegiance. Morris knows that he is communicating with a public that includes many non-Catholics, but a committed Catholic writer, in describing or chronicling his Church, has an obligation to write from within the Church and not merely gaze at it in detachment from the outside. Unmistakable in this book is its tone of light condescension, as if the author were an anthropologist describing these very interesting people who adhere to this very interesting religion. More than once priests are referred to as "shamans" and the Catholic Mass as "magic."

The Church of the 1950s gets the fullest dose of condescension. We read about "the carapaced self-confidence so typical" of it, about its "stainless steel syllogisms" that "clicked out correct answers," and about the difference between Jewish anticommunism, which opposed communism as a threat to freedom, and Catholic anticommunism, which opposed it as an "error." As for today, Morris suggests that the Church needs America for its survival, since America is its chief source of money and vocations: Most of Latin America is unchurched while Europe is all but dead to Catholicism and the rise of vocations in Africa forces the author to "wonder how many are in search only of a decent meal."

Even when Morris praises works of the Church, he seems to be playing to the non-Catholic galleries. He praises Catholic schools for producing reasonably educated and well-behaved young people, without mentioning their purpose of teaching the faith. He is excited by some of the new liturgies, but their final validation seems to depend upon good reviews from non-Catholics. He reports the comment of a Jewish friend who attended a Catholic charismatic Mass with him. "'That was wonderful,' she said when we were outside. 'That really worked!' It is hard to imagine what more could be asked from religion." Yes, it is nice when a Mass "works," but is that the final thing we ask of our religion? Indeed, do we "ask" things of

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our religion in the same way we ask them of, say, a legislature or a theatrical company? Morris indulges in *American Catholic* what proves at last a fearful reductionism. The Church is a *res publica* with bishops as politicians, priests as shamans, and vocations as careers. Religion is liturgy and good liturgy is good theater. Nowhere does this book tell us what makes the practice of Catholicism different from these other human endeavors.

From *American Catholic* I learned much about Catholics and America, but by the end of its 511 pages I had gained little insight into what it is that has inspired generations of Americans to sacrifice so much for their Church, and why it has been such a formative influence in their lives. There is *something* in the Church that has held us for so long, but to find it, I suppose, we have to turn from political studies of Catholicism to writings from quieter regions of our faith.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Plato on the Human Paradox. By Robert J. O'Connell, S.J. *Fordham University Press. 162 pp. $30 cloth, $15 paper.*

Like Santayana's famous dictum that those who don't read history are condemned to repeat it, Whitehead's line that all philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato is one of those clever observations whose damaging effects increase the more they are repeated. Dean Rusk, after all, studied the history of the Munich Conference between Hitler and Chamberlain, and proceeded to lead his country into Vietnam. And Whitehead's line about Plato can blind us to issues unknown in ancient Athens. Nonetheless, clichés don't stop being true for being clichés. And Whitehead certainly was on to something, as Father O'Connell's book so richly demonstrates. Taking Whitehead at his word, O'Connell has written an Introduction to Philosophy for undergraduates that takes up the central topics usually covered in an introductory course and treats them through Socratic/Platonic eyes. The great advantage of this approach is that, true to the Socratic method, it forces the student to think and not just regurgitate spoon-fed positions that have accumulated in the history of philosophy. And for the general reader, there is the added bonus of having one of the best short introductions to Plato available.

— Edward T. Oakes, S.J.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land: The First Ecumenical Pilgrim's Guide. By James R. McCormick. *Rhodes and Eastern. 207 pp. $12.95.*

City of Stone: The Hidden History of Jerusalem. By Meron Benvenisti. (Translated by Maxime Kaufman Nunn.) *University of California Press. 178 pp. $24.95.*

Christians often travel to the Holy Land as pilgrims—only to spend their time there as tourists. *Jerusalem and the Holy Land,* a little book written by a trial court judge from Traverse City, Michigan, addresses both the tourist and the pilgrim. For the tourist McCormick gives useful historical and topographical information; for the pilgrim he discusses different ways of relating to the holy places (the Orthodox, for example, do not want historical lectures, they want to be in Jerusalem for the liturgies of Holy Week). There are brief chapters on Jewish and Muslim holy places, and a final practical section on how to plan a trip, suggestions on where to stay (a Christian hospice, not a first-class hotel), even a set of quizzes to pass the time while moving from one site to another on a motor coach. *City of Stone* is much more a reader's book than a traveler's, giving an informed account written by a native of the Jerusalem of today in light of the history of the last hundred years. At times Benvenisti's sympathy exceeds his understanding, and he has the predictable liberal habit of calling any intense form of religion "fanatical," but his discussions of how the city came to take its present shape, the interaction of the several communities and the tensions within these communities, and the role of the city administration over the last two generations are thoughtful and illuminating. The most perceptive and original part of the book is a fascinating final chapter on Jerusalem's cemeteries—Jewish, Christian, Muslim—drawn largely from information on the tombstones.

— Robert Louis Wilken

How Wide the Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation. By Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen F. Robinson. *InterVarsity. 228 pp. $11.99.*

Evangelicals and Mormons consistently resist ecumenical rapprochement with one another—indeed, they often denigrate one another—and so the mere fact that the evangelical Blomberg and the Mormon Robin-

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son can hold the respectful meeting recorded in this book is an encouraging sign. Both New Testament scholars, the pair discuss scripture, God and deification, Christ and the Trinity, and salvation, and to the surprise of each other (and the reader) they find Mormons and evangelicals to be closer than expected. Some of this, it must be admitted, results from the fact that neither scholar is fully representative of his larger confession. Each frequently finds himself saying, "Most of the members of my church believe such and such, but they are wrong." Their real differences emerge in discussions of early Christianity, where Mormons believe in a second-century apostasy and evangelicals typically hold to some continuity of authoritative Christianity. The creeds, for example, form a real sticking point, Robinson rejecting them as nonbiblical and Blomberg using them as a plumb line to measure orthodoxy. Evangelicals may possibly find Blomberg's distinction between fundamentalists and evangelicals unpersuasive, particularly when he argues that fundamentalists, not evangelicals, stir up denominational problems. Mormons will certainly find Robinson's defense of the Book of Mormon disappointing. When he declares that the book "seems" to him ancient but "seems" to Blomberg modern, he accepts an easy—and easily refuted—relativism. Stronger arguments are available, and Robinson has some responsibility to provide more than just a shrug. But the tone of the book remains its greatest strength: Robinson and Blomberg demonstrate that conversation need entail neither compromise nor discord.

— Alan Goff

THE QUEST FOR UNITY. Edited by JOHN BORELLI and JOHN H. ERICKSON. *St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 251 pp. $11.95 paper.*

Since the Great Schism of 1054, the story of the relationship between Christians East and West reads like a tragic romance story: attraction and hunger for unity, anger and rivalry, misunderstanding and confusion. *The Quest for Unity* records the results of the most recent phase of this stormy affair. During the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic and Orthodox clergy and lay theologians met and began a dialogue that continues to this day. The Orthodox-Catholic Consultation in the U.S. has issued over two dozen statements, reactions, and responses on topics from the Eucharist to the sanctity of life to mixed marriage. This collection of those documents will be valuable, not only to the researcher or scholar, but also to everyone who wonders, "Can this marriage be saved?"

— Frederica Mathewes-Green

A CONSCIENCE AS LARGE AS THE WORLD: YVES R. SIMON VERSUS THE CATHOLIC NEOCONSERVATIVES. By THOMAS R. ROURKE. *Rowman & Littlefield. 286 pp. $62.50 cloth, $22.95 paper.*

Yet another attack on the gang of three: Michael Novak, Richard John Neuhaus, and George Weigel. Rourke, who teaches political science at Florida International University in Miami, is interested in political economy and so focuses chiefly on Novak and on Neuhaus' one book on the subject, *Doing Well and Doing Good.* Yves Simon (1903-1961) was a very distinguished Catholic thinker who is, in fact, frequently and sympathetically employed by Novak, but Rourke thinks Novak got him all wrong. It is hard to know what to make of a book such as this, since it seems more than possible that Simon's views of forty and fifty years ago would have changed in the light of subsequent discoveries about the limits of the welfare state and the strength of market economies. Rourke himself is not much impressed by those discoveries, being a more or less unreconstructed "social democrat" of a markedly anticapitalist bent. What is clear enough, but hardly seems to warrant book-length exposition, is that the author does not like the gang of three. Whether or not Yves Simon is also "versus the Catholic neoconservatives," only Simon can say. We may hope for the answer to that in a better time and place.

EUROPE: A HISTORY. By NORMAN DAVIES. *Oxford University Press. 1,365 pp. $39.95.*

A great jumble of a book that attempts to encompass Europe's story from Ancient Greece to the fall of communism in 1989-91. The author,

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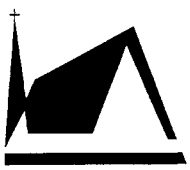

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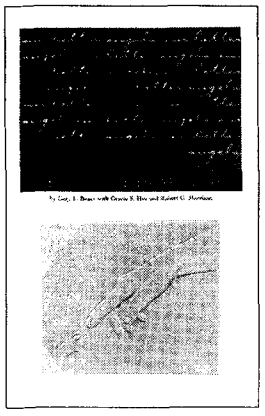

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a distinguished English historian, says the book was written in spurts and starts during dull moments at academic conferences, spare hours in hotel rooms, and even at the beach. It shows. The text betrays an erratic structure of narrative, frequent repetitions, and abundant errors of dates and names that could have been avoided by working closer to a good library. For most of the book, Davies offers few new interpretations that would warrant such an extended retelling of a familiar story, but his attentiveness throughout to the importance of Eastern and Central Europe, especially of Russia and Poland, is most refreshing. After almost nine hundred pages, the last two chapters on Europe after 1914 come alive with authorial urgency in challenging conventional wisdoms on a number of delicate questions, including responsibility for World War II and Allied mendacities in connection with the Nuremberg trials. Looking to the future, Davies thinks the influence of the U.S. has peaked and he favors European union, although he believes everything is up for grabs until the role of Russia is clarified. A potpourri of appendices and the littering of the main text with distracting "capsules" conveying incidental information of limited interest make this less than Oxford's finest hour in the making of books. But Mr. Davies now has the really big project off his chest, and it should be welcomed by those who have an insatiable addiction to reading history, and never tire of hearing the story one more time.

THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN. By REINHOLD NIEBUHR. (With an Introduction by Robin W. Lovin.) *Westminster/John Knox Press. Two volumes: 305 pp. and 327 pp. $32 paper.*

A theological classic that has been brought back into print at a relatively affordable price (although the poor photo-offset printing makes this edition less than a bargain). In his Gifford Lectures of 1939-40, delivered within earshot of German bombers attacking Britain, Reinhold Niebuhr gave the fullest exposition of his neoorthodox theology. "Magisterial" is an adjective frequently used to describe the volumes based on those lectures, and that is not an overstatement. *The Nature and Destiny of Man* is a tour de force of energy and insight that, among other things, compares and contrasts classical, modern, and biblical views of human nature; restates and demonstrates the contemporary relevance of the doctrine of original sin; distinguishes between those cultures that expect a Messiah and those that do not; explains the scriptural understanding of "progress" in history; sketches a "Christian realist" account of social ethics; and peers ahead into the end things of parousia, last judgment, and resurrection. Niebuhr, whose scholarly credentials did not quite measure up to previous Gifford lecturers, once said he was not competent to treat any specific theological subject, so in all modesty he chose to speak on the only topic he knew well—the nature and destiny of man. Though more accessible than the average work of systematic theology, these volumes still assume a minimum of theological and philosophical literacy. The story is, after an hour or two of lecturing, Niebuhr was approached by one of the locals, a pious Scotswoman who told him, "I dinna understand a word ye said, but I ken ye were makin' God great." Indeed.

WILDERNESS WANDERINGS: PROBING TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY. By STANLEY HAUERWAS. *Westview. 237 pp. $28.*

Few contemporary thinkers have so relentlessly and respectfully engaged their contemporaries in argument as has Stanley Hauerwas. His life's work is an argument, and, if it sometimes seems to be only one argument, it is an argument of surpassing importance that reveals new dimensions as it encounters new challenges. Here are essays of interaction with major thinkers of such a range as to give credibility to the book's subtitle. At least it is such a probing of mainly Protestant theology and philosophy, although the Methodist Hauerwas is increasingly in conversation with Catholics as well, notably with John Paul II. Among those who receive extensive treatment are John Cobb, Reinhold Niebuhr, James Gustafson, Paul Holmer, John Milbank, Oliver O'Donovan, and the author's friend and mentor, Paul Ramsey. Readers of *Wilderness Wanderings* will come to understand, if they did not understand before, why Hauerwas and his work figure so prominently in the pages of this journal.

THE AUTHORITARIAN SPECTER. By BOB ALTEMEYER. *Harvard University Press. 374 pp. $39.95.*

RWA stands for Right-Wing Authoritarianism, and a Canadian psychologist here evaluates questionnaire answers from hundreds of North American politicians to see where they come out on the RWA scale. Surprise! Liberals good. Conservatives bad. And when the latter favor laws protective of the unborn, they are clearly "prefascist" and the precursors of Nuremberg rallies in our future. A thoroughly silly book. From Harvard University Press yet.

RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE. By ROBERT AUDI and NICHOLAS WOLTERSTORFF. *Rowman & Littlefield. 176 pp. $16.95.*

Two philosophers debate and interrogate one another on perennial questions about religion and public life. Audi of the University of Nebraska takes the position of "neutrality" toward religion in the liberal order, while Wolterstorff contends for a more theological understanding of the liberal tradition. John Locke and other worthies of that tradition are very much present in this intelligent, informed, and always respectful exchange.

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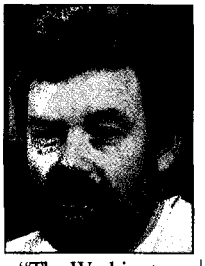

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

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Richard John Neuhaus

"We Hold These Truths"—An Argument To Be Engaged

Astute as ever, my friend Robert Louis Wilken, the distinguished church historian, is impressed by "We Hold These Truths," but he also admits to having some problems with the declaration released on the Fourth of July and included in our last issue. He agrees with other historians that a statement on a question of great public moment and endorsed by a wide array of forty-six Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox leaders may be without precedent in the American experience. But he wonders whether an important opportunity may not have been missed. Why, he asks, did it not include a more explicit and fulsome statement of Christian belief?

The statement repeatedly invokes the Declaration of Independence and its allusion to "the laws of nature and of nature's God," but that, says Wilken, is a pretty weak reed on which to lean a presentation of Christian principles for public life.

His is a question both fair and important, and he is not alone in raising it. Other questions might be asked about the statement (hereafter WHTT). Where among the signers are the leaders of the oldline Protestant churches? Should it not have been a joint statement by Christians and Jews? And why did the statement receive relatively little attention in the general media?

Please note that my response has only the authority of this author's opinion. While I helped convene the meeting that initiated the statement, assisted in the drafting (a process in which many were involved), and had a part in coordinating the entire effort, I do not presume to speak for the other signers, and, as it is said, the statement speaks for itself.

A Question of Timing

Taking the last question first, it is somewhat but not very surprising that the statement received relatively little attention in the general media. Media inattentiveness to religion is a commonplace. No doubt the familiar bias against things perceived as "conservative" also played a part. With notable exceptions, the signers are people perceived as conservative, although the argument of WHTT can hardly be fitted into the usual partisan boxes. In my conversations with reporters, a big problem seemed to be the timing of the statement. Scheduled for release on the Fourth of July, the final draft could not address directly the Supreme Court decisions that came down the week before and understandably dominated the news.

Reporters routinely operate by an established story line and, with respect to religion and the Court, that week's story line was in perplexing disarray. On the one hand, the Court overruled the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (for reasons having little to do with religion) while, on the other, it relaxed a little its rigidly secularist reading of the no-establishment provision of the Religion Clause in *Agostino*. Moreover, on assisted suicide it appeared to step back from its much-criticized practice of the judicial usurpation of politics (an appearance that is, I believe, misleading, for reasons set forth by Robert P. George and others in our October symposium on the Court).

Without a clear story line, journalists were confused. An editor at a major daily asked, "Don't these decisions mean that the Court has already heard and heeded the message of the religious leaders?" In his view, WHTT was news arriving a week too late. As welcome as the decision on assisted suicide is—although it is a great deal more ambiguous than many seem to think—the answer to the editor's question is emphatically in the negative. There is slight consolation in being reminded that a power usurped can, now and then, be wielded more cautiously.

So the general media generally missed the story of WHTT. That is too bad, but it hardly detracts from the significance of the statement. We are all—church

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leaders definitely included—inordinately anxious about the media's construal of reality. It is true, as we are regularly told, that many Christians get their news about religion—sparse as the reporting is—mainly through the newspaper and evening news. That is an indictment of Christian leaders who have not developed the means to address their people directly. Although one may hope for improvement in the general media's coverage of religion, the remedy does not lie there. Effective communication will not be achieved by having more and better ecclesiastical spin doctors. For many reasons, the likes of the *New York Times* and ABC will never be a reliable means of communicating what needs to be communicated to the Christian people. Misplaced reverence for the news industry only compounds the delusion, also among many Christians, that nothing is really important unless it is declared so by the prestige media. We must robustly reject the notion that to be on TV is to be.

WHTT is addressed to the Christian community, comprehensively defined. There it has received widespread attention in the Catholic press and, most notably, through evangelical networks such as Focus on the Family. Charles Colson, for instance, reports an unprecedented demand for the statement in response to his discussion of it on his radio program. So millions of Christians are aware of the argument of WHTT, and one can hope that it will generate thoughtful responses in the forums where Christians engage arguments.

Why Not Others

The question about why these signatories and not others is not difficult to answer. For instance, many more Catholic bishops might have been asked to sign, but there are more than three hundred of them and that would have overloaded the list with Catholics. A few who were asked to sign declined to do so, not, they said, because they disagreed but because such a statement should come through the national bishops conference, a very improbable prospect given the ideological and ecumenical penchants of the conference staff. The general rule was to ask bishops who have a record of acting as apostolic teachers rather than as branch managers, so to speak, of a national denomination. It should be said also that the positive response of the bishops was no doubt due in great part to the strong support for the statement by John Cardinal O'Connor of New York.

It is true that the leaders of the oldline, sometimes called mainline, Protestant churches did not sign, although some were asked. One need not go far to find the reason why. It can be summed up in one word: abortion. At the heart of WHTT is the assertion that at the heart of our constitutional crisis is *Roe v. Wade* and related decisions in which the Court has usurped the democratic deliberation of the right ordering of our public life. The doleful fact is that the liberal oldline churches are incapable of challenging—and in some instances are actively supporting—the unlimited abortion license imposed on the country by the Court.

Thus has abortion become a determinative ecumenical factor. On his first visit to the U.S. eighteen years ago, John Paul II raised eyebrows among some of Catholicism's ecumenical partners when he observed that Christian unity entails agreement on morality as well as on doctrine and ministry. In the more recent encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae,* he defined the common Christian cause as contending for "the culture of life" against "the culture of death." This contention is the deepest level of the "culture wars" and finds expression in what has been called "the ecumenism of the trenches" in which Orthodox, evangelical Protestant, and Roman Catholic are allied—and are too often opposed by the leadership of liberal Protestantism. This circumstance might be deplored as an intrusion of social and political issues upon the quest for Christian unity were it not that abortion and the related life issues go to the heart of the Christian understanding of human nature and moral responsibility. It is not simply that Christians disagree about abortion. It is that this disagreement has forced the question of the theological rules by which liberal Protestantism determines the truth about abortion, or almost anything else.

Perverse Pluralism

There might have been merit in making WHTT a common statement by Christians and Jews, and that was discussed along the way. As some journalists point out, that would have had more media appeal. At the same time, one may ask why Christian leaders should be hesitant to speak as Christians to the Christian people of America. One reason for such hesitancy is that Christians have internalized a perverse notion of what it means that ours is a "pluralistic" society. It is thought that any *public* statement must include everybody, and must therefore fudge the differences that make the deepest difference. But pluralism means, inter alia, that the public is composed of discrete publics. A superficial homogenization is the very antithesis of pluralism. It is precisely in the service of pluralism that we attend to distinctive communities—always in a manner respectful of other communities that comprise what we call, in a much more attenuated sense, the national community.

There is an understandable nervousness, however, about speaking of "the Christian community," since self-described Christians make up about 90 percent of the citizenry. For those who are not Christians, democratic adherence to majority rule is mixed with fear of majoritarianism. Political majorities, some insist, should be formed without reference to

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nonpolitical characteristics of the majority of the people—without reference, for instance, to their being Christians. This anxiety about majority status afflicts, not without reason, also many Christians who feel a vestigial guilt about the real and alleged oppressions perpetrated by an earlier Christendom. That uneasiness is further sharpened by a salutary concern for minorities. It is a salutary concern easily twisted into the obsessive anxiety that has produced the distinctly unsalutary "politics of victimization" that so fractures and degrades our common life.

A hundred or even fifty years ago, a declaration on the state of the nation by "Christian leadership" was deemed unexceptionable. But that reflected a time of oldline Protestantism's cultural dominance that is definitely past. What happened in the past half century is a muting of the Christian voice in public not because of secularization but because of the reconfiguration of Christianity in America, meaning chiefly the ascendancy of Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism. More precisely, the Christian voice in its Catholic and evangelical expressions is not so much muted as it is viewed by the remaining liberal establishments as suspect, as an alien intrusion upon our public life.

It is now a matter of doctrine among the advocates of perverse pluralism that there is no moral consensus in this society, and certainly no consensus based on religion. One may at least entertain the possibility that debates about matters moral and cultural were in the past more pluralistic than at present. There were more arenas of discourse—politics, the university, professional associations, religious organizations—effectively engaged in such public debates. Today the news and entertainment industry aspires to monopolize such debates, indeed to monopolize what counts as "public." Other voices, notably religious voices, are dismissed as being of only "sectarian" interest, even though the positions voiced are supported by the majority of Americans—and, perhaps, precisely because it is suspected that they are supported by most Americans.

In short, we are for many reasons in a terrible muddle about what it means to be a pluralistic society, and one result is that Christian leaders are inhibited from publicly addressing themselves to the Christian majority. (Shades of the Moral Majority!) Even as it overcomes that inhibition, WHTT attends to the sensitivities involved. The statement declares,

> Let no one mistake this statement as an instance of special pleading for Christians or even for religious people more generally. Our purpose is to revitalize a polity in which all the people of "we the people" are full participants. Let no one fear this call for our fellow Christians to more vibrantly exercise their citizenship responsibilities. We reject the idea that ours should be declared a "Christian" nation. We do not seek a sacred public square but a civil public square. We strongly affirm the separation of church and state, which must never be interpreted as the separation of religion from public life. Knowing that the protection of minorities is secure only when such protections are supported by the majority, we urge Christians to renewed opposition to every form of invidious prejudice or discrimination. In the civil public square we must all respectfully engage one another in civil friendship as we deliberate and decide how we ought to order our life together.

All that being said, a Christian-Jewish statement would likely have been better received by those, Christians included, who are nervous about the majority status of Christians. But there is little point in issuing statements that do not say what needs to be said, and the unhappy fact is that leaders of major Jewish organizations would be institutionally, if not personally, constrained from saying what WHTT says. They could not affirm, for instance, that "every unborn child should be protected in law and welcomed in life." As in ecumenical relations among Christians, so also in Christian-Jewish relations, the abortion question asserts itself and cannot be suppressed. Orthodox and more conservative Jews would agree on abortion, but perhaps not on other affirmations made. Thus trying to make it a Jewish-Christian statement would have resulted either in a glaring asymmetry between the prominence of the Christian and Jewish leaders or in a statement that did not say what we thought needed saying.

Because the Jewish-Christian connection is of extraordinary importance in our common life, a further word is in order. To the suggestion that it should be a Christian-Jewish statement, the question was raised: What about Muslims and others? That question is, in my judgment, of limited force. In terms of religious groupings and their social effect, we are not as far removed from Will Herberg's *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (1955) as some would have us believe. Nor should Christians hesitate to give priority to the singular relationship with Judaism, grounded as it is in revelation and a shared story of salvation. Moreover, Islam, Buddhism, and other traditions have yet to achieve a communal self-definition in relation to the American experience, and, while many of their adherents might subscribe to specific positions advanced by WHTT, these communities have no developed moral and theological perspective on the American constitutional order, which is the main matter of the statement.

The reader may think I have rather gone on about this, but a striking oddity of the response to WHTT

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is that it is considered odd that Christian leaders should issue a public statement that, while taking respectful note of others, is addressed to the public that is Christian. It is doubtful that it would be considered odd anywhere else in the world. It is certain that in this country it is thought quite natural that any other identifiable community should be addressed by those who are, in one way or another, recognized as leaders. The perceived oddity in this case has to do, as we have seen, with confusion about the meaning of pluralism, and that confusion is compounded by prejudices about the separation of religion from public life. There are two additional anxieties, or perhaps they should be called suspicions. First, that to speak of the "Christian community" is exclusive, meaning that it does not include everybody. Second, that speaking as WHTT speaks is to suggest that Christians have an identity other than and an allegiance higher than the identity and allegiance involved in being American. Both suspicions are, of course, entirely justified.

The Temporal and Eternal

Now to the beginning question of why WHTT does not offer a more explicit and fulsome account of Christian faith. In my view—and, again, this is no more than my view—there are several answers. The most obvious is that any statement can only do so much, and this one was intended to address, on the 221st anniversary of the nation's independence, the moral status of our constitutional order and current threats to its integrity. In addition, theological agreement among all the signers is far from complete. Some signers draw what they believe is a sharp line between speaking together on matters of faith and speaking together on matters of public life, the latter having to do only with "general grace" (as distinct from saving grace) that is shared by all. Needless to say, I do not think the line is so sharp at all, but theirs is a viewpoint to be taken into account when enlisting the support of those who are nonetheless willing to be identified with others as "Christian leaders." However much WHTT reflects a dramatic realignment of Christians around certain questions of great moral and political moment, the sad reality of Christian disunity remains.

At the same time, no apology is required for a statement that deals with the just order of temporal affairs rather than the order of eternal salvation. Forced to choose between the two, the latter is infinitely more important, but we are not forced to choose. And the two are intimately related, the former concern being required by the love for neighbor that is enjoined upon those who are embraced by the saving truth of the latter.

The Declaration of Independence may indeed appear to be a "weak reed" on which to lean a Christian statement about the right ordering of our public life. There is truth in the observation of some political theorists that this constitutional order was built on a low but solid foundation. Not so low, however, as some would have it. Talk about "the laws of nature and of nature's God" is, in the academic jargon, a thin discourse compared with all that Christians want to say about God and his ways with the world, but it is not a discourse incompatible with all that Christians want to say.

In textbooks from grade school through graduate school, the minimalist reading of the Declaration is presented as the normative reading. The founding is sanitized—one might say Jeffersonized—of "thicker" descriptions of reality, and especially of religious descriptions. (To be fair, Jefferson, although undoubtedly heterodox, was not the antireligious zealot so often portrayed.) The great majority of those who signed the Declaration and of those who wrote and ratified the Constitution thought themselves to be orthodox Christians, typically of Calvinist leanings. It never entered their heads that in supporting this new order they were signing on to a minimalist creed incompatible with their Christian profession. Rather, they self-consciously built on a Lockean-Christian synthesis that is itself the product of long Christian reflection on the right ordering of the res publica.

Against the secular and bowdlerized telling of the story of the founding, WHTT is an effort to re-situate the story in its moral, philosophical, and religious context. Already a half century ago, Father John Courtney Murray, whose work on religious freedom was vindicated by Vatican Council II, anticipated the day when Catholics might have to take the lead in restoring the founding presuppositions of this constitutional order. What he could not have anticipated is the partnership of evangelical Protestants, who, after many years in exile (largely self-imposed) following the modernist-fundamentalist division of the 1920s, have returned to the public square with such energy and determination.

The Genius of the Founding

WHTT reflects the understanding that the genius of the founding vision is, above all, in the free exercise of religion. Religious freedom is, both in order and in the logic of the thing, the first liberty guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The no-establishment provision of the Religion Clause is entirely in the service of the free-exercise provision. Religious free exercise was and is the most innovative and audacious aspect of the American experiment. The tangled confusion of court decisions since *Everson* in 1947 notwithstanding, the Religion Clause is solely a restriction on government, not on religion. Government cannot coerce or prohibit religious exercise. In the past fifty years, the courts have turned the Religion Clause upside down, subordinating the end (free exercise) to

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the means (no establishment). Again and again, government respect for religious exercise has been judicially condemned as government coercion of religious exercise, resulting in the prohibition of religious exercise wherever the government's reach extends.

WHTT should be seen as a solemn protest against this deep distortion and a warning about its fateful implications for the principles of self-government. More than one critic has noted that religious leaders are not constitutional scholars, and complained that they exceed their competence when they speak of a "constitutional crisis." I will take second place to none among those who have cautioned religious leaders not to dissipate their credibility by promiscuous and ill-informed pronouncements on social and political questions. I have long urged the maxim: When it is not necessary to speak, it is necessary not to speak. I believe it is necessary to speak on the questions addressed by WHTT.

It is necessary to speak for the continued flourishing of this republic, which we, with the founders, recognize as a gift and trust from God. WHTT cautions:

> If the Supreme Court and the judiciary it leads do not change course, the awesome consequences are clearly foreseeable. The founding principle of self-government has been thrown into question. Already it seems that people who are motivated by religion or religiously inspired morality are relegated to a category of second-class citizenship. Increasingly, law and public policy will be pitted against the social and moral convictions of the people, with the result that millions of Americans will be alienated from a government that they no longer recognize as their own. We cannot, we must not, let this happen.

A Dual Allegiance

The most urgent necessity for speaking, however, is not limited to the American circumstance, as important as that circumstance is for us and for the world. Christians of all times and places have had to think through the problems posed by their dual allegiance to the lordship of Christ and to the political orders in which they find themselves. Short of the right ordering of the universal polis in the Kingdom of God, Christians are always, in the phrase of the second-century letter to Diognetus, "alien citizens," and are obliged to do justice to both aspects of that admittedly awkward status. The questions addressed by WHTT are nothing new. They are the questions addressed by Christian leaders as various as Paul, Justin Martyr, Augustine, Hildebrand, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and Murray. If Christian leaders are not competent to speak to the question of Christian allegiance, who is?

The constitutional crisis is most importantly a spiritual crisis—precisely the kind of spiritual crisis that this *novus ordo seclorum* was designed to avoid. With few exceptions, it was designed and adopted by serious Christians, and they believed it would minimize, if not eliminate, any conflict of loyalties between Christ and Caesar. The bowdlerized version of our founding ignores the ways in which religious freedom and freedom of conscience are themselves achievements of religion. Admittedly, the story is complex and goes back long before the American founding, but the general proposition holds that religious freedom is an achievement of and for religion, not against religion. At the time of the founding, this society was of course much less socially pluralistic than it is today, but religious freedom would turn out to be the surest friend also of authentic pluralism.

If people don't like pluralism, there is an alternative. Monism keeps erupting in human history, on the left and on the right, in forms both religious and aggressively secular. Human beings are driven by deep monistic hungers that are impatient of complexity and hostile to difference. In our Western history, there was the monism of the Roman empire that conflated allegiance to the emperor and allegiance to the gods. With the rise of Christianity and the assertion that Christ is lord, it was proposed that he is lord of all or he is lord not at all. Working out what that means for the public order took many forms, including Augustine's magnificent conception of the earthly and heavenly cities. The monism of one form of Christendom reached a peak with Hildebrand, who as Gregory VII received in 1077 the humble submission of Henry IV in the snows of Canossa.

In the *societas Christiana*, according to Gregory's twenty-seven "sentences," the rule of Christ over all things was united in the office of the pope. The pope made and deposed kings and emperors, and he could both create and abolish kingdoms. It is easy to depict this as no more than a papal power grab, but Hildebrand was a holy and thoughtful man wrestling with the question of what today's political philosophy calls "regime legitimacy." The alternative to Gregory's solution at that time was the conflation of sacred and temporal authority in the despotism of the absolute monarch, as in the Orthodox East and commonly, if somewhat inaccurately, called caesaropapism. In the messy process known as the development of doctrine, Christian thought and practice hit upon one solution after another, all of them unsatisfactory, as everything is unsatisfactory short of the Kingdom.

But a most promising answer was emerging from within the Christian tradition. With the Christian appropriation of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, the concept of the Church as the sole, organic, and

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corporate union of the *societas Christiana* began to give way to an understanding of the integrity and even autonomy of politics. The entity of the state, following natural and human laws, was seen to have a legitimate place alongside the Church. It was proposed that political authority or sovereignty resided in the body of citizens, and that the exercise of power is accountable to the people, or at least to those who counted as citizens. It was not until the closing of the thirteenth century that the concept and term "political" gained currency in the West, which led, in turn, to other differentiations such as the moral, religious, social, and economic. Long before the schisms of the sixteenth century, and even longer before the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, here was the beginning of the "modern" problem of pluralism in public life and its governing institutions.

After the Reformation there were renewed and sometimes magnificently flawed efforts to reconstruct monisms in obedience to the lordship of Christ. One thinks, for instance, of Calvin's Geneva, Cromwell's commonwealth, or, in this country, the Bay Colony of Massachusetts. The turbulent emergence of democratic theory and practice under Protestant auspices is brilliantly told in A. D. Lindsay's *The Modern Democratic State*. Still today there are vestiges of the monistic dream kept alive in American evangelicalism by movements such as R. J. Rushdoony's "Christian Reconstructionism." And I would not be surprised if there are some conservative Catholics who, in their heart of hearts, believe that Gregory VII and Innocent III had it right after all.

It is not accurate to say that Christianity has made its peace with pluralism and democracy, as though they were forced upon it and only grudgingly accepted. Nor is it accurate to say that pluralism and democracy are achievements of Christianity alone. But without Christianity they would not have been. The Church acknowledges these children as her own, even if some of the midwives involved in the delivery were less than friendly to the Church. Today, declares John Paul II in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Redeemer), "The Church imposes nothing. She only proposes." She would not impose if she could, and that precisely for the sake of the mission of the Redeemer. Democratic theory and practice is not of first concern for the Church. Priority is and must always be given the mission of Christ. Among the things learned from the Church's experience of religious monism is that it compromised and obscured the lordship of Christ by confusing his rule with ecclesiastical power in the temporal realm.

Agnosticism Established

The 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (The Hundredth Year) is a magisterial (in every sense of the word) summing up of the theological, philosophical, and practical case for the modern democratic society. It is an argument that can be and has been embraced also by Protestant and Orthodox Christians. At the heart of the argument is a caution that explains WHTT's sense of urgency about our constitutional crisis:

> Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that the truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

The development of the thirteenth century was to posit the integrity of the secular alongside the sacred. The American experiment was to respect and protect the sacred alongside the secular. The current course threatens to eliminate the sacred from all that is recognized as public. In reality, no society can survive without reference to the sacred; talk about legitimation is thinly disguised talk about the sacred. The real question is where the sacred will be located, and the sleight of hand worked by today's courts is to locate it in the state, under the pretense of locating it in the autonomous individual. The sacralization of the state under ostensibly antireligious auspices is all too familiar from our experience with the undisguised totalitarianisms of history.

What John Paul calls the threat of "thinly disguised totalitarianism" is in the American circumstance posed not only by the judicial usurpation of politics. As WHTT notes, legislative dereliction is the other side of judicial usurpation. When the representatives of the people fail in their duty to engage the great questions, including the great moral questions, about the right ordering of our life together, it is not surprising that the courts take over. There is a symbiotic connection between legislative timidity and judicial arrogance. The crisis is deepened by other factors, including the entertainment industry's assault on values and the efforts of educators to establish "agnosticism and skepticism" as the official belief system of society. But WHTT is right to direct its main attention to the

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judiciary, for it is there that these impulses receive systematic expression and attain the force of law.

WHTT takes note of the infamous "mystery passage" of *Casey* in which the Supreme Court declared that liberty acknowledges no higher law than the thought and will of the individual. Some constitutional scholars have urged that this and similar passages are but instances of reckless rhetorical inflation and entail no practical consequences. That is not persuasive. In *Weisman* the Court suggested that any ethic that is not of human invention is religious, and therefore its recognition in law violates the no-establishment provision of the Religion Clause. In *Romer* the Court cavalierly dismissed millennia of reflection on the right ordering of human sexuality as no more than an irrational "animus" comparable to racial discrimination. These are consequences of great consequence.

First of Second Best

In their anticipation of the heavenly city, alien citizens know that every earthly order is, at best, second best. But in the past, most Christians in America have viewed this order as the first of the second best. Christians embraced the promise of religious freedom by which a sovereign people could publicly name a higher sovereignty. They believed there were truths not of their own invention to which, individually and collectively, they were to adhere—as in "the laws of nature and of nature's God." Both individual license and majoritarian abuse were restrained by such truths to which the majority held itself accountable. It was a wondrously intricate system, designed neither for angels nor for beasts but for human beings capable of both barbarity and decency. Such was the Christian devotion to a temporal order not untouched by transcendent glory. WHTT does not say that order has been abandoned. It does say that it is gravely threatened.

What would it mean if religiously serious citizens were to become disillusioned with the American order and withdraw, if only inwardly, their allegiance? I earlier cited the pertinent passage from WHTT on popular alienation. Last November the editors of this journal started an enormous controversy when they wrote: "What are the cultural and political consequences when many more Americans, perhaps even a majority, come to the conclusion that the question is 'God *or* country'? What happens not in 'normal' times, when maybe America can muddle along, but in a time of great economic crisis, or in a time of war when the youth of another generation are asked to risk their lives for their country? We do not know what would happen then, and we hope never to find out."

The symposium *The End of Democracy?* is now a book by the same title, and there I discuss in great detail the controversy generated by the symposium. I continue to ask: Why the great controversy? What do the critics suppose are the likely consequences of a crisis of political legitimacy? Is John Paul II a reckless alarmist when he speaks of the dangers of "thinly disguised totalitarianism"? Perhaps the critics have not had opportunity to explain sufficiently the reasons for their serene confidence that it can't happen here.

Consider what has happened already. The nonestablishment of religion, the Court decrees, means the exclusion of the deepest convictions of most Americans from our politics and law. In a raw exercise of judicial power, legal protection is withdrawn from a large sector of the human community as the unborn are made subject to the lethal whim of private choice. While holding back for the moment from discovering a constitutional right to suicide, the Court can find no principled reason why the elderly, sick, and others living lives deemed not worth living should not be relieved of the burden. Further, the Court invites the states to a new flirtation with the culture of death by experimenting with such programs of putatively merciful relief. All the time making clear that the Court, and the Court alone, will have the final say on the matter.

Yes, it is objected, but such measures, as wrong and even abhorrent as they may be, are only permissive in character. They may allow bad things to be done but do not require Christians to do them. Christians are not required to violate their conscience. They can go on living their lives and speaking their minds as freely as ever. Not exactly. They can speak their minds but it is forbidden that their speech be given legal effect. That would be to establish an ethic that is not of human invention; that would mean taking forbidden legal cognizance of an irrational animus. The engines of secular monism are relentless.

Powerful pressures are brought to bear to induce active complicity in the permission of great evil. Protest against the evil is to be punished, as witness the federal government's marshaling of draconian laws—some originally designed to combat organized crime and international terrorism—in order to break organizations and punish individuals involved in antiabortion protest. Never—certainly not in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s—have so many American citizens been harassed, abused, arrested, and jailed for peaceful protest in a completely selfless cause. With honorable exceptions such as Nat Hentoff, civil libertarians either remain silent or cheer on the forces of government repression, while the prestige media successfully portray those who actively oppose the killing of children as "extremists."

At Ease in the American Zion

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truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that the truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends." Those words of John Paul are disturbingly close to the position enunciated in decisions such as *Casey* and *Romer*. The position is not that of the majority of Americans but of an elite political trend in support of the essentially nihilistic proposition that there is no truth apart from the "truths" constructed by the autonomous self. The distinguished philosopher Richard Rorty carries "ironic liberalism" a step farther when he charmingly opines that, when confronted by people who say they know the truth, we must try to josh them out of it, or, if that fails, lock them up.

Crisis-mongering from all directions has over time closed many ears to any talk about crisis. Critics respond that this is a wonderful country in which to live, and of course they are right, but that is hardly to the point. In a time of relative peace and unprecedented prosperity, the message of WHTT is not likely to grab the attention of those who are at ease in the American Zion. How, they ask, can there be a threat to religious freedom when religious leaders are free to speak as they do in WHTT? The curious logic would seem to be that the sounding of an alarm is proof that there is nothing to be alarmed about. WHTT is a calm and deliberate argument that something has gone deeply wrong; a trend is already far advanced.

All the signers may not agree with everything said here, but the argument of WHTT is that, more than two hundred years after its birth, the nation is on a course that has brought about a constitutional crisis that, if it is not remedied, has the makings of a crisis of allegiance for many millions of its citizens. It is a remarkable, indeed unprecedented, thing when cardinals, archbishops, and bishops join with the leaders of some of the most vibrant faith communities of the country in making such an argument. Whether in agreement or disagreement, it is an argument that should be engaged by those who care about Christian witness in the public square of the first of second best cities.

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Unhelpful Complexifiers

"Shatter the Silence" is the theme of the campaign to raise popular awareness of religious persecution around the world. The campaign is meeting with encouraging successes. Earlier this year the State Department issued a report on the massive persecution of Christians, shattering its near silence on the question. Establishment human rights groups are being embarrassed into paying more attention to religious persecution. The Wolf-Specter bill in Congress would give the concern economic and diplomatic teeth in U.S. foreign policy. On Sunday, November 16, tens of thousands of local churches will concentrate attention on persecuted Christians.

For bringing about this potentially historic change in our understanding of global responsibility, special credit goes to a few indefatigable individuals such as Nina Shea of Freedom House, a Catholic (see her report, "Atrocities Not Fit to Print," on page 32 of this issue), and Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, a Jew. It is chiefly evangelical Protestants, however, who have generated the momentum and provided the hard organizational work for the campaign. Catholic leadership has been, for the most part, embarrassingly hesitant, and some seem content to kibitz from the sidelines.

Taking note of the campaign, the editors of *Commonweal* tell us that the question of religious persecution is "complex." Presumably our evangelical friends did not know that. Eager to be helpful, the editors offer what they call "some caveats." The editors allow that there is a "legitimate concern for Christian persecution," but question whether it is legitimate for the policy of a "pluralist society" to single out the persecution of Christians. They do not say what they think of the earlier and successful campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry. In any event, the editors acknowledge that the National Association of Evangelicals and others have made clear that their concern includes Tibetan Buddhists, Baha'is, and all other victims of religious persecution. So what's the point of the first "caveat," apart from cultivating the perception of editorial superiority when it comes to nuance and complexity?

The editors offer the further "caveat" that there is a difference between religious persecution and discrimination. For instance, they note, England officially supports one established church. Our evangelical friends will no doubt be grateful for that intelligence. For another instance, "Some Islamic countries tolerate indigenous Christian groups but prohibit their growth." True enough. But some, probably most, do not. And some that do put up with Christians "prohibit growth" by killing Muslims who become Christian or share the Gospel with others.

More interesting is a third "caveat." The editors write, "Some of the conservatives leading the current effort seem unable to resist the impulse to make the issue a political football in America's culture wars. They seem as interested in settling scores with the National Council of Churches and the United States Catholic Conference as in exerting effective pressure

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on persecuting governments." That is a very serious charge, made only slightly less odious by the qualifying "they seem." Nonetheless, there is an appropriate worry in this caveat. The campaign to ensconce concern for religious persecution in U.S. foreign policy is too important to be sidetracked by the usual conservative vs. liberal battles. At the same time, unlike the editors of *Commonweal,* the NCC and some of its member churches have not been content with superciliously raising complexities and caveats. They have repeatedly and openly attacked the campaign against religious persecution. The NCC, following its shameful pattern during the years of the Cold War, has belittled and often denied the persecution of fellow Christians, while the record of the Catholic Conference has been, shall we say, uneven.

After losing its lease in downtown Manhattan several months ago, *Commonweal* moved its offices to the Interchurch Centre at 475 Riverside Drive, a building once called the "God box," where the NCC and, until recently, the operations of major oldline churches were headquartered. Up there on Morningside Heights are concentrated, in addition to 475, Union Theological Seminary, Riverside Church, and the Episcopal cathedral of St. John the Divine. Morningside Heights is a veritable mount of memorials to the now departed cultural hegemony of liberal Protestantism. In a recent issue, *Commonweal* editors worried, tongue in cheek, that they might be morally contaminated by the efficient elevators, fine cafeteria, spotless rest rooms, and other comforts of 475. Their editorial on the campaign against religious persecution suggests that they might better worry about other forms of potential contamination. Now that *Commonweal* and the ancien régime of liberal Protestantism are cohabitating, one watches with interest to see who will influence whom, and how. The campaign against religious persecution is a splendid opportunity for the editors to persuade their new neighbors that this is a cause deserving of the deepest commitment by all Christians, and everyone else. (For parishes and study groups there is a fine "Shatter the Silence" video and information packet available from Shatter the Silence, P.O. Box WEF, Wheaton, IL 60189; or call 1-888-538-7772.)

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TAKING SUPERSTITION SERIOUSLY

"Spontaneous combustion" is the term used to describe the growth of "autochthonous" Protestant churches in Latin America. These are groups that are radically indigenous, having no connection with evangelical missionary efforts from North America or elsewhere. Writing in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* two veteran observers report: "Latin American Protestants traditionally have been accused of subverting Latin America's unity by introducing religious forms that run counter to Latin culture. Traditional Protestants may well stand accused of such foreignness. But the autochthonous churches—with their rhythms, charismatic leaders, passion, personal sacrifice, and openness to the miraculous—are not only highly contextualized but, according to some, may be more attuned to the region's culture than traditional Roman Catholicism." While "enculturation" is much discussed by Roman Catholics, the authors suggest that these new movements may be taking the lead.

"In recent years Catholic folk religion—*religiosidad popular* ("popular religiosity," as it is known in Latin America)—has received much attention and analysis. Far from the lofty philosophical and theological heights of official Catholicism, and equally far from the politically radical views of liberation theology, the down-to-earth practice of Latin America's masses revolves around tangible practices and objects such as pilgrimages to shrines, religious fiestas, water from sacred springs, and objects with curative powers. Some look with disdain upon this popular religion. Others countenance *religiosidad popular* and hold in prospect the possibility of building upon it to lift the masses to a higher and more spiritual faith.

"It has not escaped the attention of many that Latin America's autochthonous Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on cures and material blessings, may be a Protestant equivalent of Catholic popular religiosity. Observers share the same contrasting perspectives—disdain or appreciation. Some see only the crude manifestations of Protestant 'popular religiosity'; others, thanking God that the masses are being reached, anticipate a growing maturity in these movements.

"The charges that Protestant autochthonous movements are susceptible to syncretistic influence is countered by some autochthonous leaders who draw attention to syncretistic 'Romish' influences in the historic Protestant churches. Such leaders also point out that historic churches in Latin America pay little attention to the demonic and may easily overlook the persistent superstitious or even occult practices of their members. Autochthonous groups, in contrast, recognize the existence of the spirit world and demand that new converts renounce all non-Christian practices."

It may be the case, we are told, that not all Christians must go through what Marx called "the fiery brook" of Feuerbach's Enlightenment

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deconstruction of religion. "The real issue is whether mission-related churches can understand and adopt the best of a pre-Enlightenment worldview that is common to the masses in Latin America. This is a view that is open to the miraculous, to God's intervention in daily experience, to biblical confrontation with the demonic, and to a focus in worship that emphasizes reveling in God's presence rather than passive participation in a cerebrally oriented service." The relationship between Catholics and non-Catholic movements in Latin America is very much on the agenda of the initiative known as "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." And, one may hope, it will be very much on the agenda of the forthcoming Roman synod for America (meaning both North and South) that begins in November.

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When Reporters Search Their Souls

When it comes to "journalistic ethics," reporters are always searching their souls. The search usually doesn't come up with much. Terry Golway, a reporter who writes a regular column in the Jesuit *America*, takes on the subject of when it is right to expose public hypocrisy. The occasion is the appearance of a magazine story that a New York politician—whom Golway names but I shall not—is guilty of marital infidelity. Golway censures the slick magazine writer and implies that the story is only gossip, but he gives it further currency anyway.

At the same time, he believes there are cases where public exposure is appropriate, even imperative. "What if a pro-life politician has an abortion, or arranges for one? What if a politician who votes against gay rights legislation is, in fact, homosexual? What if the politician who parades a spouse and children before adoring audiences is, in fact, a lousy parent? What if a politician who preaches about family values is a regular client at a pornography shop?"

Note that all his examples have to do with conservative figures or, as he puts it, "politicians who sell themselves as moral leaders." The moral would seem to be that, if you don't want to be charged with violating the standards you espouse, espouse no standards. But of course, moralism is at least equally pronounced among liberals. How about an antismoking crusader who smokes in private, a proponent of black rights who makes racist jokes on the side, or a gay rights supporter who disowns his daughter because she is lesbian? Whether the standards be about matters great or trivial, whether espoused by the right or the left, hypocrisy is an equal opportunity offense.

Where Golway goes entirely off the tracks is with another example he offers. "A friend of mine tortured himself before reporting several years ago that the wife of a Right to Life candidate had had an abortion years before. Was that fair? Absolutely." If the friend really tortured himself, perhaps—although for some reason I am inclined to doubt it—he had deep pro-life convictions. In fact, stories of the kind mentioned appear with some regularity, and they have nothing to do with Golway's subject of hypocrisy. For instance, Jean Garton, founder of Lutherans for Life, has frequently called attention to the number of women in the pro-life leadership who were once strongly pro-choice and had themselves resorted to abortion. In the case as described by Mr. Golway, the invasion of privacy was entirely unjustified, since his wife having had an abortion has no bearing on the credibility of the candidate's position. Of course a smart candidate might, if his wife agreed, cite the horror of her experience as further reason for opposing the abortion license, just as Jean Garton and others do.

Mr. Golway's confusion of hypocrisy with moral fragility and the possibility of repentance is not untouched by partisanship. The politician to whose alleged infidelity he draws attention (while indicating that we should ignore it) is not, we are assured, among those who present themselves "as moral leaders or vibrant personalities." The politician in question, I expect, might be somewhat ambivalent about Mr. Golway's odd endorsement. But Golway's point is that Americans do not look to political leaders for moral leadership, and he thinks that may be a good thing. "In today's money-poisoned politics, after all, there is no shortage of scandal in high places."

Thus Mr. Golway ends his soul-searching about public hypocrisy and journalistic ethics with the suggestion that scandal in high places—could he possibly be thinking of the White House?—really doesn't matter that much, but, to the extent it does matter, the blame should be placed on money poisoning, and the remedy is, of course, campaign finance reform. So much searching to come up with such a limited and partisan conclusion. At the end, Mr. Golway returns to the rumor about the politician's infidelity and writes, "It's too bad slick magazine writers are so limited in their fields of interest." Quite. Not that anyone would call *America* slick.

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SIN AND RISK AVERSION

Dorothy Rabinowitz of the *Wall Street Journal* has done a great service in recent years by exposing the hysteria that seizes whole communities when someone accuses a teacher or nursery school of sexual abuse. Here and there all over the country, like witch hunts of old, the madness suddenly breaks out and hundreds of people are harassed, arrested, and sometimes jailed for years on the flimsiest of evidence. It is frightening, and, of course, many lives have been ruined. Naturally, there are lawyers and experts, usually psychologists of one sort of another, who make a living out of all this.

From the peanut gallery: Well yes, but what about the abused kids whose lives are ruined? A good question. We dare not belittle the seriousness of the sexual abuse of children. At the same time, sexual abuse is subject to wildly different definitions, and there is something terribly wrong when parents and other adults are afraid of the legal repercussions in the most innocent gestures of affection.

So why do I mention this? (Warning: Now it gets controversial.) In recent months I have received or been shown letters from a number of clergy, Protestant and Catholic, who are in jail for sexually abusing minors, male and female. Not surprisingly, some claim they were railroaded, and the studies of Rabinowitz and others make that all too believable. Guilt or innocence aside, however, there is another and profoundly disturbing factor here. A common lament of these clergy is that their bishops and fellow clergy have completely cut them off. One priest says he has not heard from or been visited by a priest for three years. "Risk aversion," another says, is the order of the day, as bishops follow the advice of lawyers who tell them to keep their distance. Are these letters self-serving? Probably so. But one bishop tells me they ring true to him, although he maintains close contact with the one priest in his diocese who has been charged with abuse. A Methodist supervisor says, "I don't care what he's done, he's one of ours."

Catholics in particular should understand that a priest is still a priest, as in "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizidek." Nowhere does the Bible say we should visit those in prison, unless they're in for child abuse. I was discussing this with an acquaintance and mentioned the words of Jesus, "When I was in prison you visited me." To which he immediately responded, "But Jesus would never be in prison for something like that!" So he would be in prison for insider trading?

The Diocese of Dallas has been hit with a huge $120 million judgment for its negligence over a period of years in letting a Father Kos get away with interfering with young boys. It appears the responsibility rests chiefly with the predecessor to the current bishop, but that in no way lets the diocese off the hook. In order to distance the diocese from the sleazy business, it has announced that it is appealing to Rome to nullify the priest's ordination on the grounds that he, in order to be ordained, lied to the diocese about his sexual proclivities. Some may think that good public relations, but critics point out that the diocese is responsible for priestly formation and screening candidates for ordination. In addition, it is noted that the last time Rome nullified an ordination was forty-seven years ago.

An official of the diocese says the purpose of the appeal is to make emphatically clear that Fr. Kos is "isolated from the Catholic Church." There is something disturbingly un-Catholic about such an expression. I have no idea whether this Fr. Kos is repentant or not, but even if he isn't, isolating someone from the Church is not my understanding of the Catholic way. Many years ago, G. K. Chesterton responded to an anti-Catholic critic who charged the Church with tolerating a vast horde of criminals, prostitutes, and other unsavory types who hang on to its fringes. That is a fact, said Chesterton. "They cannot get the Church's sacraments or solid assurances, except by changing their whole way of life; but they do actually love the Faith that they cannot live by. If you explain it by supposing that the Church, though bound to refuse them absolution where there is not amendment, keeps in touch with them and treats their human dignity rather more sympathetically than does the world, Puritan or pagan, that also probably refers to a real fact. It is one of the facts that convince me most strongly that Catholicism is what it claims to be. After two thousand years of compromises and concordats, with every sort of social system, the Catholic Church has never yet become quite respectable. He still eats and drinks with publicans and sinners."

Whether sinners are on the fringes or presiding at the altar, the Church is still the Church. A priest's betrayal of his office is a terrible thing, and crimes must be punished. More terrible to contemplate, however, is a Church that, for reasons of institutional risk aversion, isolates sinners from the redeeming love of God in Christ, which is the only reason for the Church's existence.

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WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ I recently published, in *Pro Ecclesia,* an essay on John Henry Newman's views of Martin Luther, set forth in his *Lectures on Justification.* While esteeming Newman highly, I think he saw too much

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coherence between Luther's ideas and their consequences in the Protestantism of his day. Like Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, I am inclined to accent more the "secondary motives" in history. Shortly before he was martyred by the Nazis, Bonhoeffer wrote: "Today is Reformation Day, a feast that in our time can give one plenty to think about. One wonders why Luther's action had to be followed by consequences that were the exact opposite of what he intended, and that darkened the last years of his life, so that he sometimes even doubted the value of his life's work. He wanted a real unity of the Church and the West—that is, of the Christian peoples, and the consequence was the disintegration of the Church and of Europe; he wanted the 'freedom of the Christian man,' and the consequence was indifference and licentiousness; he wanted the establishment of a genuine secular social order free from clerical privilege, and the result was insurrection, the Peasant's War, and soon afterwards the gradual dissolution of all real cohesion and order in society. I remember from my student days a discussion between [Karl] Holl and [Adolf] Harnack as to whether the great historical intellectual and spiritual movements made headway through their primary or their secondary motives. At the time I thought Holl was right in maintaining the former; now I think he was wrong. As long as a hundred years ago Kierkegaard said that today Luther would say the opposite of what he said then. I think he was right—with some reservations."

■ *Newsweek* irresponsibly splashed this big story on how the Pope is getting ready to infallibly declare Mary co-redemptrix and mediator of all graces, causing considerable anxiety among ecumenically inclined Protestants and not a few Catholics. There are no doubt many Catholics who would welcome such a papal definition, and I believe a theological case can be made for the appropriateness of such Marian titles. As Cardinal Newman and others said of another definition of dogma in the nineteenth century, however, I also believe such a step would be "inopportune," in the extreme. Vatican Council II made it clear that the proper course of Marian devotion is not to heap up additional privileges and exemptions that distinguish her from other Christians but to incorporate our understanding of Mary ever more fully into the life of discipleship as the icon of the Church. In any event, the Holy See has officially announced that the reported development is not being considered and will not happen. In sum, *Newsweek* and others who followed its lead were puffing a nonstory, creating a little temporary mischief in the ongoing quest for greater Christian unity.

■ Of course you never know these days, but this seems *not* to be a parody. Roger Kimball of the *New Criterion* took it off the Internet and passed it along for possible comment. VHEMT (pronounced vehement) is the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement. "When every human chooses to stop breeding, Earth will be allowed to return to its former glory, and all creatures will be free to live, die, evolve (if they believe in evolution), and will perhaps pass away, as so many of Mother Nature's 'experiments' have done throughout the eons." A VHEMT Volunteer subscribes to the proposition, "All of us should voluntarily refrain from reproducing further, bringing about the eventual extinction of Homo sapiens." Those who sign up as VHEMT Supporters take a more moderate position: "Intentional creation of one more of us by any of us is unjustifiable at this time, but extinction of our species goes too far." The group publishes a newsletter titled "These EXIT Times." And a journal called *Earth First!*. The VHEMT website asks the question, "Do volunteers expect to be successful?" Answer: "VHEMT Volunteers are realistic. We know we'll never see the day there are no human beings on the planet. Ours is a long-range goal." If the goal is achieved, they will presumably not live to see it. As for other creatures that "believe in evolution," one might observe, paraphrasing Orwell, that only a human being could do that.

■ Grand constitutional theory and intellectual debates about the role of the judiciary in a democracy have their place, but Park Chamberlain of Woodside, California, thinks we should also be paying attention to some more mundane factors. "Now, the reason these judging jobs are and always have been eagerly sought is this: Lawyers as a class are not great moneymakers and, though they mostly earn decent day-to-day livings, find it hard to provide old-age economic security for themselves and their wives. Hence the possibility of enjoying a judgeship for such Golden Years—with its ulcer-free work hours and its honor, perks, and pension—becomes extremely appealing, even though to win it means that such an aspirant must expect to toil industriously in the Party vineyard, raising and contributing to Party funds, etc." As things have turned out, federal judgeships are in the patronage of Senators who often take one position in order to appease one part of their electorate and then promote judges who will take the opposite position, thus pleasing another part of the electorate. Says Chamberlain: "This technique has been virtually impossible for conservatives to meet, because when an activist liberal judge makes some far-out decision, later conservative judges are called upon by liberal groups to respect precedent! And of course, conservative Senators—such as Bob Dole—found it impossible to escape the time-honored practice of you-vote-for-my-judge-and-I-vote-for-your-judge. You will remember that in the recent presidential campaign, Clinton successfully laughed off Dole's

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complaints about the Clinton appointments by noting that Dole had voted for some 98 percent of them! Well, of course he had, alas!" Mr. Chamberlain, an octogenarian with time to think about these matters (time which he obviously puts to good use), has a further thought: "Finally, and in addition to the above reflections, which are factual in nature, I have a theory—and one that I admit is on the speculative side—that the new role of the bench is encouraging a quite different class of aspirant thereto—younger men and women who are reformist by nature, and have grasped that the best way to political power and Getting Things Done is not through the laborious, time-honored jumps from local government to state government to national officeholding of some kind, but rather through the judicial appointment route—federal, of course, being the best. The result may be that the federal bench will in the future become less occupied by elderly 'lawyers-who-knew-politicians' looking to a tranquil and economically secure old age, but by youngish persons consumed by political zealotry. However, as I said above, this is theoretical and it will not be until some years after my time that any proof of its truth will become available."

■ A poignantly confused article in the *Nation* is "Creating a New Gay Culture: Balancing Fidelity and Freedom." Author Gabriel Rotello notes that, despite "one of nature's deadliest viruses," gay men, especially younger men, continue to indulge in unguarded promiscuity. The argument for "safe sex" or "fidelity" doesn't work. "That argument might make sense if unsafe sex automatically or even usually led to HIV infection, and if HIV quickly and invariably led to illness and death. But the cause-and-effect relationship between unsafe sex is not followed by the swift and sure penalty of infection. One can expect to have unsafe anal intercourse dozens of times before becoming infected, even with an HIV-infected partner, and one can expect to have unprotected oral sex perhaps hundreds of times with an infected partner and still avoid infection. Biostatisticians grimly point out that the cumulative result of all these individual risks is the continued high prevalence of HIV in gay communities." In the gay subculture, he reports, being HIV-positive is commonly viewed as a plus, since one is no longer worried about being infected. He proposes that gay men need to "feel socially supported . . . to settle down with partners for significant periods of time." He then offers this candid evaluation of the politics behind the campaign for same-sex marriage: "The antimarriage sentiment in the gay and lesbian political world has abated in recent years, and the legalization of same-sex marriage is now an accepted focus of gay liberation. Yet prevention activists generally don't include marriage as a goal because they generally don't include monogamy as a goal. Belief in the condom code seems to render the subject moot. Meanwhile, most advocates of same-sex marriage fail to make the case for AIDS prevention because they are generally careful not to make the case for marriage, but simply for the *right* to marriage. This is undoubtedly good politics, since many if not most of the major gay and lesbian organizations that have signed on to the fight for same-sex marriage would instantly sign off at any suggestion that they were actually encouraging gay men and lesbians to marry. But while practical, it leaves unarticulated the argument that legalization of same-sex marriage and the right of homosexuals to adopt and raise children would create a solid foundation upon which a sustainable gay culture could arise. Fighting for those rights may turn out to be among the most important things gay men can do to assure our own survival." Like the noted advocate Andrew Sullivan, Mr. Rotello assumes that same-sex marriage would have to be marriage with infidelity loopholes built in. Moreover, settling down "for significant periods of time" is something less than a "solid foundation" for the rearing of children. In this mimicry of marriage, however, the homosexual advocates may simply be reflecting the pattern of a divorce-prone culture.

■ "Within the Jewish community there are some who see the public school as a central integrating unit in American society, while others recognize the importance of religious-sponsored schools in providing a sense of religious tradition and a training in faith and values." That is Bishop James McHugh of Camden, New Jersey, reporting on a Jewish-Christian symposium on education vouchers held at Catholic University in Washington. Representative Floyd Flake, a black minister and member of Congress from Queens, New York, has broken with the Black Congressional Caucus by supporting vouchers. Bishop McHugh notes that those who are sympathetic to Flake nonetheless balk when it comes to Catholic schools. They shouldn't, he says: "Over the years Catholic schools have been dedicated to serving the poor, immigrants, the disadvantaged and underprivileged. In fact, that is our history because the Catholic schools came into existence when Catholics were the poor, the immigrants, the victims of discrimination. Now Catholic schools are widespread in the suburbs but also retain their presence in the cities. Tuition is the basic source of income, but sustaining Catholic schools calls for substantial subsidy from parishes, benefactors, and the diocese. Nonetheless, fear of Catholic schools persists and it is stirred up by any mention of a voucher program. But vouchers are not the survival mechanism for Catholic schools. Enrollment has been increasing steadily over the past decade. Vouchers will not provide a massive influx of funds; they will help parents meet tuition costs. They will not create an explosion of new schools or expansion of the existing Catholic school

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network, but they will expand choice for parents and this will result in the growth of some schools and the creation of new ones in new areas. Voucher programs will have virtually no harmful effect on the funding of public schools, especially in the suburbs." He ends on a hopeful note: "Those at the symposium, especially from the Jewish community, showed increasing awareness of this and the willingness to deepen their own understanding and possible support. It's time to engage our neighbors and our politicians in a similar dialogue directed to a new understanding and some new initiatives." I am not sure that vouchers would not have an impact on funding for government-run schools. It depends in large part on whether the teachers' unions in those schools are up to making them competitive. The question on which this argument should turn is the right of parents to choose the education they want for their children. It is a right explicitly guaranteed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, at least theoretically, in American constitutional law. It is a simple matter of justice. Having said that, let's hope that Bishop McHugh is right in sensing a turning of the tide.

■ "'Let all things be done in order,' urged St. Paul, who was both a humanitarian and a stickler for lawful conduct." That is from an article appearing in the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* and circulated by the Institute on Religion and Democracy in protest against a United Methodist bishop, Charles Wesley Jordan, who urged the 200,000 Methodists of Iowa to offer "sanctuary" to illegal immigrants. The reference is apparently to 1 Corinthians 14:40, where St. Paul is addressing liturgical confusions occasioned by speaking in tongues. Moreover, it would not occur to me to describe St. Paul either as a humanitarian or as a stickler for lawful conduct. Nonetheless, I expect the article is right in its contention that Bishop Jordan is wrong. (Jordan is also president of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, commonly described as the largest religious lobby in Washington.) Focusing on illegal immigrants begs the question of justice for those who are here legally and for those who want to immigrate legally, and it is far from evident that biblical morality requires unlimited immigration. That is, of course, the position of the *Wall Street Journal*, a publication of considerable, but not quite biblical, authority. With respect to immigration and much else in the public square, let all things be done wisely and justly, as St. Paul might say were he here to counsel the maddeningly confused movement for which he is largely responsible.

■ Those foundations called conservative (Bradley, John Olin, Scaife, Earhart, et al.) are but a very small part of the American world of philanthropy that is dominated by the liberal likes of Ford, Johnson, Carnegie, MacArthur, and hundreds of others. The management culture of philanthropy—as distinct from the people who put up the money that they manage—has a strongly leftward bent, and the people within that world view with alarm the influence of the smaller conservative foundations in recent decades. The National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), for instance, has recently issued a report crediting those clever right-wingers with having virtually taken the country captive to conservativism. Michael Joyce of the Bradley Foundation is not impressed. It is the natural state of affairs in a liberal society, he says, that we have liberals, whose passion is liberty, in tension with social democrats, whose passion is equality, and at war with civic republicans, whose passion is virtue. Civic republicans, a.k.a. conservatives, affirm what Tocqueville called "the practical intelligence and political good sense of the American people." On most things, most of the time, ordinary people know what's best for them and theirs. It is not surprising that NCRP reports that "free market ideology and antigovernment rhetoric will almost always hurt poor and low-income constituencies first and most disproportionately." To this, Joyce responds: "In the final analysis, our vision of giving at Bradley is based on quiet confidence in the basic wisdom and fundamental decency of the average American citizen. The argument of the NCRP report—that voters today prefer smaller government, stronger values, and freer markets only because they were gulled by conservative advertising—rests on a very different assumption about the American people: the view that they are ignorant and easily deceived, desperately in need of the oversight and guidance offered by the progressive elites. As long as some parts of the philanthropic world continue to base their giving on that patronizing and insulting assumption, they will continue to spend millions, with little to show for it. As long as others are willing to work *with* the grain of human nature and in accord with the genius of the American republic, the returns will be so rich and rewarding that the envious but self-deluded critics will only be able to conclude that we are the cleverest and most guileful of conspirators."

■ Here's a site on the Internet inviting folks to join an "Ecumenical Dialogue on Women's Ordination," sponsored by one Luis T. Gutierrez. The invitation cautions that the discussion must be conducted "in a spirit of Christian charity." "No flaming is allowed from either side of the issue." Then this: "IMHO [in my humble opinion], the male-only priesthood is *not* of divine will. However, our goal is to seek the truth in charity, with proper respect toward those who are in apostolic succession, and following the model of community discernment given to us in Acts 15. May God's will be done." Acts 15 on the Internet is an intriguing idea. In that chapter Peter and James

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speak the mind of the Church, and we read, "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church," to support the ministry of Paul to the gentiles. The apostolic letter in the same chapter puts it yet more strongly, "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . ." One imagines the conclusion of the proposed dialogue on women's ordination, assuming such dialogues can ever conclude: "It seems good to 241 people accessing our website that women should be ordained, while 183 say the Church is not authorized to ordain women. Since there is no recorded hit by the Holy Spirit, the motion is carried that women should be ordained." Mr. Gutierrez says, "IMHO, the male-only priesthood is *not* of divine will." At least for a Catholic, such an opinion is hardly so humble. The opinion flatly holds that the Pope is wrong, as is the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which, with the express authorization of the Pope, declares that the Church's teaching on this matter is infallible. One may say one has difficulty understanding that teaching, or that one thinks the teaching has not been adequately explained, or even that one hopes that in the future there will be some presently unforeseeable development of the teaching that will, in a manner consistent with the teaching, allow what is now disallowed. The last hypothetical is a reach, to be sure, but arguably within the range of assent to the Church's authoritative teaching. What is neither honest nor constructive, at least for faithful Catholics, is to claim to be seeking God's will while rejecting the Church's authoritative discernment of God's will. It does not help at all to describe that rejection as a humble opinion.

■ A chilling report on doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia in the Netherlands in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* includes this: "An illustration given by the attorney for the Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society of why it is often necessary for physicians to end lives of competent patients without their consent was the case of a nun whose physician ended her life a few days before she would have died because she was in excruciating pain but her religious convictions did not permit her to ask for death." Forget about your conscience, Sister. We know what's best for you.

■ "The First Amendment was crafted to ensure that the religious rights of individuals would not be compromised by public authority. The Establishment Clause serves that purpose only to the extent that it advances the free-exercise rights of individuals; when disestablishment is invoked to burden free-exercise rights, it undermines the very Constitution of which it is a part." So writes Joseph Viteritti of New York University in the *Yale Law & Policy Review*. In an impressive article of almost a hundred pages, he makes a convincing case for government financial aid for parents who choose to send their children to religious schools. Friends of the simple justice of school choice, take note.

■ One of the great essayists of our time, John Sisk, has died at age eighty-three. From 1939 he was Professor of English at Gonzaga University and his reflections on everything from golf to satanism were published in almost all the intellectual and literary journals of the English-speaking world, including frequent appearances in these pages. In this office, any manuscript of rambling brilliance, filled with epiphanies of unexpected connections, was called "Siskian." Most of them were by John Sisk. We will miss him greatly. *Requiescat in pace.*

■ Egypt is one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid of various sorts. It is also among the countries with the worst record of persecuting Christians, specifically Coptic Christians, who constitute a large minority. "Christians in Egypt: Church Under Siege" is an excellent forty-page summary, with an informative bibliography, and is available from Christian Solidarity International. Write CSI-USA, P.O. Box 70563, Washington, D.C. 20024.

■ Evangelical-Catholic cooperation grows and grows. Here's a release from the Rutherford Institute indicating that they're defending the right of two students at New Caney High School in Texas to wear rosaries. The principal says the rosary resembles a symbol worn by gang members in Houston, but the police say that's nonsense, and Rutherford says the school is engaged in antireligious discrimination. Now I'm trying to convince Catholic friends that they should not be trying to get a high school in Florida to prohibit Protestant students from telling their Catholic classmates that they're going to hell for "believing in Mary." Not, of course, that there is a symmetry between the rosary and telling people they're going to hell, but forbidding even wrongheaded religious expression is no way to protect religious freedom. Anyway, Protestants of the kind who believe in hell no doubt take the Bible seriously and therefore can hardly help "believing in Mary," although they may not believe all that is to be believed about her. Just imagine: High school students excited about rosaries, Mary, and hell. What are things coming to? (This word just in: Rutherford won the case.)

■ According to the British medical journal the *Lancet*, a serious move is under way to expel the Israeli Medical Association (IMA) from the World Medical Association (WMA). The last group to be expelled was the South African Medical Association during the years of apartheid. The issue with the IMA is its refusal to condemn, and indeed its complicity in, what human rights organizations call Israel's widespread practice of torturing Palestinian prisoners. Israel officially calls the practice the application of "moderate physical pressure." The

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government maintains that all detainees are "under constant medical supervision," which is just the problem, according to the WMA. In addition, Dr. Ruchama Marton, an Israeli psychiatrist, was called before an IMA ethics committee and found guilty of slander for calling for an investigation of the abuse of psychiatry in Israeli prisons. Friends of Israel must hope that the IMA and Israeli government will make a more effective response to growing expressions of international concern than simply repeating the claim, undoubtedly true, that Israel is imperiled by very real enemies. The isolation of Israel as a rogue state outside the circle of human rights conventions is not a happy prospect.

■ It's not exactly a dirty little secret, but neither is it much discussed. Among evangelical Protestants, some of the most strident attacks on "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT) and similar efforts at reconciliation in the Gospel truth come from leaders of evangelical mega-churches for whom Catholics are a primary, if not the primary, market for recruitment. Some such churches boast that more than half their membership is composed of former Catholics, and their continued growth depends upon convincing more Catholics that the Catholic Church is, quite simply, not Christian. The ECT affirmation that Catholics and evangelical Protestants are "brothers and sisters in Christ" is fatal to their business. In November, John MacArthur, a vociferous opponent of ECT, is hosting an "ExCatholics for Christ Conference" at his Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California. Speakers include a long list of anti-Catholic writers and activists, including a "panel of former priests and nuns," who will expose "The False System of Roman Catholicism." The nineteenth century's awful revelations of Maria Monk get a new lease on life. Viewing religion purely as a business enterprise, one may be inclined to the opinion that all is fair in expanding market shares. But of interreligious warfare it is also true that the first casualty is truth. Please do not misunderstand. I have no reason to doubt that anti-Catholics such as John MacArthur, Dave Hunt, and Joe Jordan sincerely believe that the Catholic Church is the enemy of the Gospel and that they are rescuing souls from its clutches, in addition to building their little empires. Their sincerity only adds to the sadness. Fortunately, since the appearance of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" in 1994, the evangelical opposition has been marginalized and is now mostly limited to those in the anti-Catholic business. Meanwhile, ECT has been moving ahead with very careful theological consultations and meetings between Catholic bishops and evangelical leaders, both here and in Latin America, aimed at evangelizing the world for Christ with rather than against one another in the twenty-first century.

■ According to *Forum Letter*, Pastor Rebecca Heber of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Maryland, filled out the forms and sent in the requisite $35 to have a display at the assembly of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The problem was that it was a display in support of ministries aimed at helping people overcome their homosexual behavior. When asked by the bishop's office to remove the display because some people found it offensive, Pr. Heber refused, showing her receipt and contract. So the assembly voted to have the display table removed. The same assembly asked the national ELCA to rescind its teaching that single Christians should be sexually chaste. Pr. Heber observed that the synod was less than consistent in its vaunted affirmation of diversity and inclusivity, and she wants her $35 dollars back.

■ Congressman Joseph Kennedy has enlisted considerable support for his demand that the U.S. Army's "School of the Americas," based in Georgia, be shut down. The demand is vigorously supported by a wide array of Protestant and Catholic religious groups operating out of the United Methodist Building on Capitol Hill, many of which have a long record of support for left-wing dictatorships in Latin America. The critics note that Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and the Salvadoran right-wing leader Robert D'Aubuisson attended the school, which is true. They do not note that they are hardly representative of the more than sixty thousand Latin American officers who have received training on the role of the military in democratic societies. I have no doubt that some of what is taught at the school is not the kind of thing learned in Sunday School. The officers are presumably being trained to fight bad guys, and it seems doubtful that kinder and gentler methods would be encouraged if they were trained by the French, Israelis, or Chinese. As former Senator Sam Nunn and others have pointed out, the argument against the "School of the Americas" is essentially an argument against a well-trained military, or any military in Latin America that might be sympathetic to the U.S. It may not be pertinent, but I see that, in view of Mr. Kennedy's much-discussed annulment, Michael Kelly of the *New Republic* describes him as "the only Congressman to be certified by the Pope as mentally immature." What excuse the National Council of Churches, the Maryknollers, and the U.S. Jesuit Confererence have, I don't know.

■ The last time we had occasion to refer to Dan Rather, a television newsperson, he was linking the Heaven's Gate suicide group with "cults" such as the much admired Bruderhof community. Mr. Rather seems to have rather a problem with confusing religion and cultism. After a news segment on the

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Chinese government's persecution of Christians, he concluded with this: "An editor's note: When your reporter was in China recently, a very high-ranking Chinese government official was repeatedly asked questions about religious persecution. He told me, and I quote directly, 'These stories are untrue. We do, as you do, have some trouble with cults and we, like you, deal with them accordingly, but that's all.' End quote." High-ranking government officials, especially of the Chinese kind, do not tell lies.

■ I had said that Barry Lynn of Americans United for the Naked Public Square (that isn't quite the exact title) "served briefly as a United Church of Christ minister." Nancy Krody of Temple University writes to inform us that Lynn "remains a member in good standing in the Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of the U.C.C." I have a quirky mind and it's probably unfair, but for some reason I immediately thought of William E. Miller's *Piety on the Potomac*, which Miller says is, like the river, a mile wide and a foot deep. Actually, my impression is that Mr. Lynn is religiously committed and thinks others should be, too, so long as they don't make a public issue of it. In any event, my original comment was intended to say that he served briefly as a parish minister.

■ I haven't seen *Nothing Sacred*, the ABC series about a young priest who is not sure he believes in God but knows that the Church's teaching on sexuality is a crock. At least that's the way Bill Donohue of the Catholic League describes it, and I expect he's right. The gimlet-eyed Dorothy Rabinowitz of the *Wall Street Journal* describes it in much the same way and concludes with this wise observation: "There is a hilarious book to be written, someday, about television's notion—reflecting that of the culture at large—of what a dissenter is, and about who gets to be called an iconoclast. This series, brimming with all the received social wisdom of our times, all the reigning orthodoxies, should occupy a central place in such a study. What really would have been revolutionary, of course, would have been a television series about a priest determined to uphold the traditions of his church and the basic tenets of his faith. If such a series were ever made, it would be not only revolutionary but also something of a miracle."

■ In her new movie, *G.I. Jane*, Demi Moore insists on "one standard" and "no special treatment" and does succeed in turning herself into a virtual man. In the real world of the increasingly unreal military, double standards and special treatment are the order of the day, as also in police and fire departments under court orders to increase the number of women. Problem: Women can't throw those heavy hand grenades far enough. Solution: Give them lighter and less explosive hand grenades. Winning wars has become the military's number two mission. Unless you include the gender war. Maggie Gallagher thinks the whole business of women in combat is an exercise in looniness. She writes: "In any decent society men feel it is their job to protect women from physical attack. Ideologues who wish in the name of choice or gender equality, or any other idol, to strip men of this sensibility are not acting in the interests of women. Nowadays movies like *G.I. Jane* often show men and women engaged in hand-to-hand combat. In the movies, the one invariable rule is: Women win such battles. In real life, they get sent to emergency rooms or battered women's shelters."

■ Yes, I know, there is no comment in this issue on the assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the meaning of its gyrations in declaring full communion with the Reformed, turning down the concordat with the Episcopalians, and approving the joint statement with Catholics on justification. We had hoped to have it ready for this month but Matt Berke, managing editor, has a thing about sticking to the production schedule. Of course, that's a thing that managing editors are supposed to have. Stay tuned.

■ Writing in *Books & Culture*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, who serves on our Editorial Advisory Board, takes on Jaroslav Pelikan's acclaimed *Mary Through the Centuries*, with specific reference to current feminist critiques of Marian devotion. The problem is not that Pelikan is on the wrong side on these questions but that he tends to evade them, thus reinforcing the wrong side. Fox-Genovese puts it this way: "But as we have seen, in *Mary Through the Centuries*, as in *Jesus Through the Centuries*, Pelikan has chosen to write about the place of Mary and Jesus in history and culture rather than about their place in religion. The decision spares him from engaging the controversies that surround the place of Mary and Jesus in religion, but it nonetheless carries some troubling consequences. In emphasizing the place of Mary in history and culture, Pelikan is tacitly acceding to the postmodern insistence upon the imperative to 'historicize' all aspects of culture and society. For true postmodernists, the point of 'historicizing' is, above all, to expose the power relations that shape and inform culture, thereby exposing the works of culture as so many exercises in one or another group's defense of its interests and power. Under this leveling glare, the very notion of eternal truth melts away, leaving nothing more than a series of social 'constructions.' Indeed, Pelikan's emphasis in *Jesus Through the Centuries* upon the infinite varieties of Jesus in our own time precisely, if inadvertently, captures the postmodern claim that Jesus is never any more than individuals' or dominant groups' construction of him." Most offensive to feminist sensibilities is the devotion to Mary as the icon of

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obedience, indeed of submission. But obedience is offensive to sinful human nature, male or female, and that is precisely where the argument needs to be joined. Fox-Genovese writes: "Women have reason to protest attitudes and treatment that have too frequently suggested their denigration. But no amount of legitimate complaints justifies the reversal of the essence of that faith, the substitution of the individual—man or woman—for God. For the essence of the faith does lie in humility and, yes, obedience, both of which are anathema to the spirit of our times. And, as Jesus taught, the practice of Christian faith does not come from compliance with the spirit of the times. In the words of Balthasar: 'Faith is the surrender of the entire person: because Mary from the start surrendered everything, her memory was the unsullied tablet on which the Father, through the Spirit, could write his entire Word.'"

■ For some years now Trinitarian theology has been making a big comeback in theology, but it now seems to be infiltrating what we persist in calling culture. This from the August 11 "Milestones" column in *Time* magazine: "Died. William S. Burroughs, 83, novelist, cult figure, and perhaps the most audacious member of a Beat Generation trinity whose other two divinities were Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. . . . His life was as extreme as the experimental fiction he pioneered, involving alcohol, heroin, homosexuality, a celebrated obscenity trial in Boston, and, in 1951, his accidental killing of his wife while shooting a glass off the top of her head." Some lament that our culture has regressed to paganism. With gods like these, paganism begins to look attractive.

■ A bright undergraduate in an Ivy League university says she has decided to become a conservative and wants to know what books to read. I am at something of a loss. There are so many different kinds of conservatism, and one cannot help but wonder whether reading the books should not come before the decision. In any event, George H. Nash, author of *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* comes to the rescue. In the July/August issue of *Policy Review* he has an article, "Modern Tomes," in which he lists and briefly describes the most influential conservative books and articles of the past twenty years. They are: *A World Split Apart* by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn; *The Way the World Works* by Jude Wanniski; *Breaking Ranks* by Norman Podhoretz; "Dictatorships and Double Standards" by Jean Kirkpatrick (*Commentary*, November 1979); *Free to Choose* by Milton and Rose Friedman; *Wealth and Poverty* by George Gilder; *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* by Michael Novak; *Reflections of a Neoconservative* by Irving Kristol; Address to the National Association of Evangelicals (March 8, 1983) by Ronald Reagan; *Modern Times* by Paul Johnson; *The Naked Public Square* by Richard John Neuhaus; *Losing Ground* by Charles Murray; "Dan Quayle Was Right," by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead (*Atlantic*, April 1993); *The Book of Virtues* by William Bennett; *The Vision of the Anointed* by Thomas Sowell; *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* by Richard Gid Powers. We are eager to see what she decides after she gets through that formidable reading assignment.

■ In my response to Dean Anthony T. Kronman of the Yale Law School in the matter of their policy of discrimination against religious organizations (Correspondence, August/September), I mentioned in passing that it was strange that we had not heard from Professor Stephen Carter of the law school, who has written so much and so well about bias against religion. Now information from Professor Michael Stokes Paulsen of the University of Minnesota Law School may throw light on that aspect of this discussion. Some months ago he and Carter were both on a program at Seton Hall University and Carter was asked about the Yale policy. He answered that those who were on the committee that devised the policy had agreed among themselves that they would not make individual statements on the matter. Therefore, said Carter, "I am unable to offer any words in defense of Yale's policy." He then added, "Even were I not a member of the committee, I would be unable to offer any words in defense of Yale's policy." Although Dean Kronman's secularist ideology allows no exemptions for religion, one hopes the committee will see fit to allow Professor Carter to explain his own position more fully.

■ We don't hear that often from Trapper Creek, Alaska, but the Rev. Mark Christian reports on a new "state of the art" hospital, built with federal funds, that was recently dedicated there. It is being called "the crown jewel of Alaska Native healthcare," and includes an "igloolike meditation room." Natives are complaining that the room is more New Age than native. Since a large number of Alaska natives are either Roman Catholic or Orthodox, Fr. Christian expects the walls of the meditation room will soon be informally adorned with icons of the Blessed Virgin and other saints, at which point officials will no doubt complain about native resistance to the government's solicitude for native religion. As Sam Goldwyn might have put it, "You try to be inclusive and they keep including themselves out."

■ Next month: The people of the stiff upper lip collapse into a blubbering mass of media-induced emotional excess. From bulimia to bathos, it was all anticipated in Lionel Trilling's analysis of "the age of sincerity and authenticity." Why that first week of September was not, as commentators claim, "the week

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of two saints," and why a national newspaper asked for, and rejected, a column on Mother Teresa that cited her prophetic words to a culture gone astray. We are not making this up, although we wish we were.

■ *We will be pleased to send a sample issue of the journal to people who you think are likely subscibers. Please send names and addresses to* FIRST THINGS, *156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010.*

Sources: On religious persecution, *Commonweal*, August 15, 1997. On growth of indigenous Protestant churches in Latin America, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, October 1996. Terry Golway on public hypocrisy, *America*, August 30, 1997. On statement by Diocese of Dallas, *New York Times*, April 5, 1997; Chesterton quote in *Wisdom and Innocence* by Joseph Pearce.

WHILE WE'RE AT IT: On Mary as co-redemptrix, *Newsweek*, August 25, 1997. Park Chamberlain on judicial appointments, personal correspondence. "Creating a New Gay Culture: Balancing Fidelity and Freedom," by Gabriel Rotello, *Nation*, April 21, 1997. Bishop McHugh on school vouchers, weekly column for *Catholic Star Herald*, May 23, 1997. On Iowa Methodists urging sanctuary for illegal immigrants, *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 9, 1997. Michael Joyce on American philanthropy, *Philanthropy*, Spring 1997. On doctor-assisted suicide in the Netherlands, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 4, 1997. Joseph Viteritti on Establishment Clause, *Yale Law & Policy Review* (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1996). On Texas high school students wearing rosaries, Rutherford Institute press release, July 21, 1997. On move to expel the Israeli Medical Association from the World Medical Association, *Lancet*, July 5, 1997. On opposition to Pastor Rebecca Heber and ministries to help homosexuals, *Forum Letter*, August 1997. On School of the Americas, August 4, 1997 press release from the Institute on Religion and Democracy. Dan Rather on persecution of Chinese Christians, cited in Media Research Center's *Notable Quotables*, July 28, 1997. ABC television series *Nothing Sacred* reviewed by Dorothy Rabinowitz, *Wall Street Journal*, August 18, 1997. On movie *G.I. Jane* starring Demi Moore, Maggie Gallagher, *New York Post*, August 29, 1997. Jaroslav Pelikan's *Mary Through the Centuries* reviewed by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Books & Culture*, May/June 1997. *Time* magazine's August 11 "Milestones" column cited in *Notable Quotables*, August 25, 1997. Michael Stokes Paulsen quotation of Stephen Carter, from a forthcoming article in the *Seton Hall Law Review*. On meditation room at Alaska hospital, personal correspondence.

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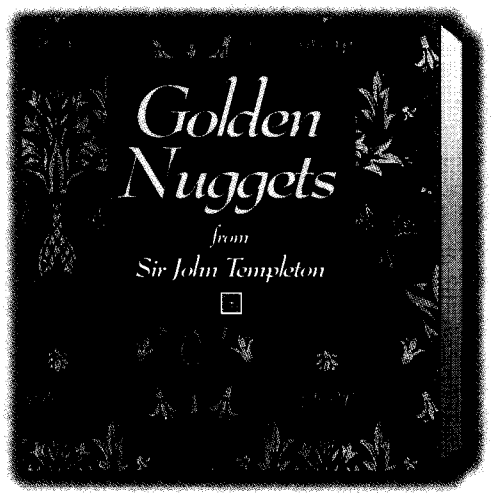

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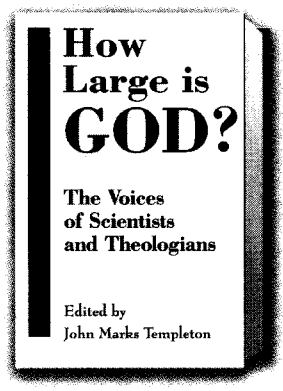

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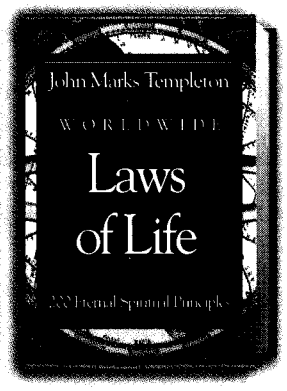

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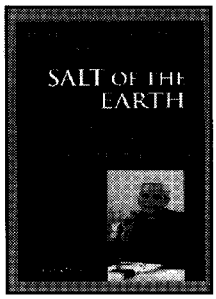

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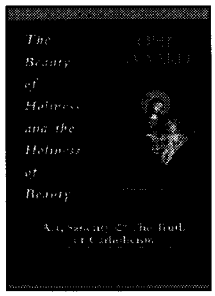

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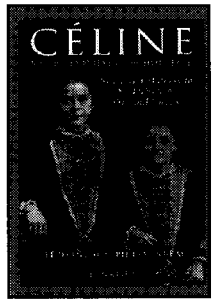

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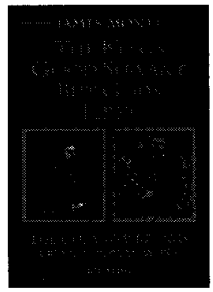

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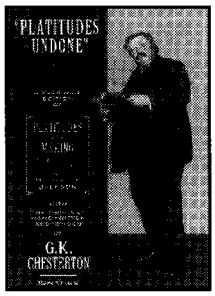

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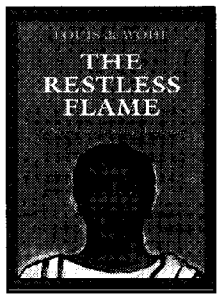

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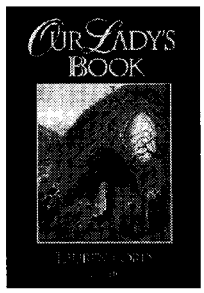

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